

# THE NATION

## AND ATHENÆUM

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### EVENTS OF THE WEEK

THE League of Nations seems to be suffering from malaise. Through its various organs it is drifting from one subject to another, taking it up and letting it drop again without having made any perceptible progress towards its solution. Its Economic Section arranged and carried through an admirable Conference, which passed a series of enlightened resolutions calling urgently for the reduction of trade barriers between the nations, but what is being done to give

effect to these resolutions? The League Council met recently, and was mainly engaged in debating the long-standing dispute between Roumania and Hungary. It would not be fair to blame the Council for its failure to find a compromise acceptable to both parties, but the fact remains that the question is unsettled. At the request of the last Assembly, the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference has created a new Security Commission, which met last month and drew up a series of model treaties of arbitration and security, but it is very doubtful whether any real treaties will be built upon these models. Finally, the Preparatory Commission itself has just been meeting, and, after expressing its disgust at the Soviet proposals for drastic disarmament, has adjourned without even giving a second reading to its own draft Convention.

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We do not record these symptoms of paralysis in a carping or malicious spirit, but the League has been so far successful, and has achieved so great a position in the world that its health and vigour are matters of great moment. The TIMES wrote the other day that:—

"There was a time when the League was the happy hunting-ground of heady theorists and builders of evanescent Utopias. It has been discovered by realists, statesmen, and men of affairs, who are making it an important centre for the transaction of international business."

There is no doubt an element of truth in this, and it should be put to the credit of the "heady theorists" that they have created an organization of such influence that the "realists" are no longer able to ignore its existence. It was essential that the statesmen who really control international affairs should go to Geneva and be brought into contact with the spirit of the League, but there seems now to be a danger that they may destroy that spirit. It is true that no progress can be made with such matters as disarmament without the consent of the Governments at home, but hitherto Geneva has been continually pressing the Governments to advance; now the obstruction seems to take place in Geneva itself. The replacement of Lord Cecil by Lord Cushendun as British delegate on the Preparatory Commission is symptomatic of the change which has occurred.

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In these circumstances we have the greatest sympathy with the outburst of Count Bernstorff, the German delegate, just before the Commission adjourned. They had been so determined, he said, to reject the Soviet disarmament plan in favour of their own that the least that Germany could expect would be that the Commission would proceed to discuss its own Convention, which for two days they had been praising with such remarkable unanimity. For two years it had been argued that the absence of Russia from the Commission was a reason for delay, and now that Russia

was there her presence was made the pretext for further delay. Count Bernstorff then moved that the Council should be recommended to summon the Disarmament Conference itself at an early date, but found himself in isolation, "because," as he said, "Germany desired the work to be done immediately, whereas the majority were not for instant action." It is not only natural, it is inevitable that bitterness should be aroused in Germany by these interminable delays. She has been disarmed with the most solemn assurances that general disarmament would follow. It is wholesome that the other nations should be constantly reminded of this obligation.

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One faint gleam of hope that comes from Geneva is Count Clauzel's announcement that conversations are taking place between the Governments and the experts "which have enabled them to make progress with regard to some very delicate questions," which will shortly allow "some most satisfactory results" to be presented to the Disarmament Commission. This carefully guarded statement is understood to imply that progress has been made in reconciling the British and French views as to the mode of reckoning naval armaments. The difficulty hitherto has been that the French desired limitation by total tonnage only, while the British desired limitation by the size and number of units in each category. The importance of the question lies in the fact that the breakdown at Geneva was due to a very similar conflict of opinion, and Count Clauzel's statement is interpreted as an indication that not only the French and British, but the American, and possibly the Japanese and Italian Governments, are engaged in the search for a compromise formula which would permit another Conference to be held with better chances of success. Meanwhile, there are encouraging signs that American opinion—faced with the appalling cost of replacing the battle fleet during the next few years—is disposed to consider on its merits the British proposal for reducing the size and extending the agreed life of capital ships.

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The Liberal Industrial Conference revealed an overwhelming preponderance of opinion in favour of the proposals of "Britain's Industrial Future." The resolutions embodying the conclusions of the Report were carried with only minor changes, and those not of a weakening character. Amendments critical of the policy of national development received only an inconsiderable backing. Amendments hostile to the principle that employers should be obliged to give full financial information to their Works Councils, found more supporters, but still only a small minority of the Conference. The proposal to which the opposition was strongest was the proposal, which appeared in the Samuel Commission's Report, that municipalities should be empowered to engage in the retail sale of coal. That the opposition should have been so strong on this point and so weak on others testifies, we think, to the discrimination of the Conference; for though we are in favour of this power being given to the municipalities, by way of experiment, in the special case of coal, the principle of municipalities engaging in retail trade is not one which appeals to us. The broad effect of the Conference is that the policy of the Liberal Industrial Report is now the official policy of the Liberal Party.

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On Monday Mr. Ramsay MacDonald initiated a debate in the House of Commons on the distress in the coal-mining areas, basing himself mainly on a report by Mr. Pethick Lawrence and Mr. Rhys Davies on the conditions in South Wales (which does not appear as

yet to have been published). The facts presented by Mr. MacDonald were grisly; and Mr. Chamberlain, for the Government, did not pretend that they were otherwise. For years past, South Wales has been one of our depressed regions. It now stands out from the others—even from the North-East Coast—in the extremity of its distress. Is it generally realized that the percentage of insured persons in Wales who are unemployed to-day is no less than 25? So far as the mining industry is concerned, no one is sufficiently brazen to hold out any longer complacent hopes of a recovery in sight. What, then, is to be done? Mr. Chamberlain points to the Industrial Transference Board as evidence that the Government is doing all it can. But it is not easy, under present conditions, for the Industrial Transference Board to find openings for the surplus miners on a considerable scale. The work of transfer must be facilitated by a policy of capital development. It is not facilitated by periodic raids upon the Road Fund or by the general preoccupation with economy.

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Sir Robert Hutchison's resolution in favour of a Ministry of Defence or some similar authority, produced an interesting and useful debate in the House of Commons on Tuesday. Mr. Baldwin himself handsomely recognized the service done by the Liberal Party in calling attention to the question, and speakers from all sides of the House united in urging the necessity of greater co-ordination between the Services, both with a view to administrative economy, and for the purpose of securing breadth and unity in the higher direction of war. The Prime Minister and the War Secretary, for the Government, contended that this was already achieved by the working of the Committee of Imperial Defence in its new form, the Committee of Chiefs of Staff, and the various sub-committees appointed *ad hoc* for the consideration of special questions, and that much further progress was possible along existing lines. Mr. Lloyd George replied that, while the reports of these Committees were valuable, they did not supply the place of a central executive body with control over all three Services. It is quite clear that more will be heard of the matter. The creation of a Ministry of Defence involves both technical and political difficulties which forbid hasty action and a single night's debate gave far too little opportunity for a thorough exploration of the subject; but the case for greater unification of control, whatever its exact form, is clearly gaining ground. Both Mr. Baldwin's very lucid exposition of the existing system and the criticisms of Sir Robert Hutchison and Mr. Lloyd George were excellently calculated to clear the ground for further discussion.

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Lord Cave has resigned the Lord Chancellorship on account of ill-health and has been succeeded by Sir Douglas Hogg, who becomes a Baron. Sir Thomas Inskip is appointed Attorney-General, and Mr. F. B. Merriman is the new Solicitor-General, and gets a knighthood. It is said that Lord Birkenhead was invited to become Lord Chancellor again, but that he preferred to remain at the India Office. The chief interest of the changes lies perhaps in the corollary that Sir Douglas Hogg will never be Prime Minister. When Mr. Baldwin took office, he was alleged to have prophesied that within two years he would be succeeded by Sir Douglas Hogg. Since that time, however, Mr. Baldwin's reputation has grown, and the political acumen of Sir Douglas Hogg has not been conspicuously manifested. There are only two or three possible Prime Ministers in the present Cabinet, and the removal of one of these is therefore a matter of some interest—to the others, at any rate.



The debate in the House of Lords, on March 22nd, on the Amendment to the Plumage Act, must have stirred old memories reaching seven years back when the Commons scotched one of the ugliest and most wanton of commercial exploitations. The amending Bill proposes to prohibit the sale of what it is already illegal to import. As Lord Danesfort, who introduced the Bill (it was brilliantly seconded by Lord Buckmaster) pointed out, it is ludicrous to make a law at one end and break it at the other. It is therefore not surprising that the Archbishop of Canterbury, in a courageous and imaginative speech, should have characterized the Government defence of the trade as "almost pitiable." There is surely nothing to be said for a traffic which has already had close on seven years in which to unload its old stock and to develop the millinery industry by devising new forms of ornamentation innocent of cruelty and the wholesale destruction of the most beautiful forms of wild life. The precedent of America is a proof of the necessity to extend the prohibition from the Customs House to the shops. How could Lord Salisbury, who spoke for the Government, question the evidence of smuggling which follows upon the leakage in the present law when 136,000 grebe skins were found in one consignment? The lightness of feathers gives infinite scope for their disguised importation in boxes, parcels, and crates with false bottoms, while the consignments which slip through undetected may be imagined from the number of seizures and convictions. But the best proof of the extent to which smuggling is practised is the trade's own statement in 1921 that there was only enough plumage in the country to last nine months.

The existence in Nottinghamshire collieries of two organizations—the Notts Miners' Association, affiliated to the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, and the Non-Political Industrial Union, formed by Mr. G. A. Spencer at the end of the national coal stoppage in 1926—both claiming to represent the miners, has resulted in serious difficulties, culminating in a strike at one pit. Last week the General Council of the Trades Union Congress arranged a meeting with Nottingham colliery owners to secure a free choice of unions for men employed in Notts collieries. The trade-union delegation stated that economic pressure was being brought to bear on miners to join the "Spencer" Non-Political Union, at some pits membership of this association having been made a condition of employment, while the usual facilities have been withdrawn from the Notts Miners' Association. The owners replied that they intended to adhere to the agreement made with the representatives of their workmen, i.e., the Non-Political Union, and that they could not recognize any other organized body of workmen. They offered an assurance, however, that they make no discrimination between the members of different unions with regard to employment. Nevertheless, the New Hucknall Coal Company has apparently exercised such discrimination at its Welbeck pit, and the Notts Miners' Association has declared a strike at the pit, and is conducting the struggle with the aid of the Miners' Federation.

As we go to press a joint conference is being held between the Shipbuilding Employers' Federation and the shipyard Trade Unions to consider the demand of the latter for an increase of wages of 10s. a week to time-workers and an equivalent increase of 15 per cent. to piece-workers. The trade-union demand, which is a renewal of wages applications which were unsuccessful made in 1925, and again in 1927, was originally

refused by the employers early this year, on the ground that the terms on which the work at present in hand was being done left no margin for an advance in wages. Nevertheless, the employers are now offering a wages advance of 3s. a week to time-workers. The offer is, however, qualified by the condition that the trade unions shall agree to consider jointly with the employers the preparation of an index scheme for the regulation of wages, and undertake to co-operate in the matters concerning the organization of work arising out of Part I. of the Report of the Joint Inquiry into Foreign Competition and Conditions in the Shipbuilding Industry, made in June, 1926. It is unlikely that the employers' offer will be accepted in its present form and with the attached conditions.

The treaty between the Emir of Transjordan and the British Government might well be used as a model instrument for regulating the relations between a Mandatory Power and subject rulers in the Mohammedan East. The Emir is the head of a subordinate sovereignty which extends over the half desert lands to the east of a line joining the Gulf of Akaba and the Red Sea. The road between Damascus and Medina runs through his territory, which, but for the road, would be mainly populated by the Beduin. Two towns, Maan and Amman lie on the road, and each is surrounded by a certain amount of cultivated land; but it is the traffic along the road, not the towns, which makes the administration of the emirate an international concern. The treaty provides for British control over all questions that may affect neighbouring States, either mandatory or sovereign. The judiciary, the defence force, and the Customs are all under British supervision. The Emir is, however, to raise his own revenues, to pay for his administration, by means of Budget Laws upon which he is to take the advice of the British representatives. As the Emir has never been a sovereign prince, the treaty registers no derogation of sovereign rights; and it is a great advance on the old Turkish regime that local rulers should have their relations to the superior power regulated by an instrument which definitely establishes the rights of each party.

For several weeks, the Italian Press has said nothing about the negotiations between the Vatican and the Quirinal; but on Monday the Pope himself made an utterance that seems highly relevant to the matter. The National Centre Party, an association of Fascist Catholics, had recently passed a resolution in which the head of the Church and the head of the secular State were both addressed in complimentary language. His Holiness informed the association that the compliment gave him no pleasure. It would have been more tactful to pass two distinct and quite separate resolutions. Nor did the Pope end here. A Fascist Catholic has apparently written about the questions at issue between the State and the Church as though the two were on an equal footing. This, says His Holiness, is indiscreet and very incompetent. The rights of a State that has robbed the Holy See are not the same as the rights of the plundered Church. Almost at the same time, the Pope has openly expressed his sympathy with the German Catholics in the Tyrol. The Fascist Government are therefore dealing with a man who does not intend to barter away the least part of his spiritual influence or his temporal claims in return for a political advantage. The most interesting development that can now occur is that some influential Fascist should suggest a cudgelling for the Pope and his Cardinals; and that the Duce should be compelled to give his views on the suggestion.

## WOMEN, THE VOTE, AND THE HOSPITALS

THAT women will vote at the next General Election on the same terms as men is now virtually certain. The agitation within the Conservative Party which would substitute twenty-five for twenty-one as the minimum voting-age has made no headway; and it is clear that opposition in the House of Commons to "votes for flappers" will be confined to a handful of Diehards. It is interesting to observe that outside the House of Commons this opposition usually takes a form which does not challenge the principle of sex equality. It is urged merely that the voting-age for both sexes should be twenty-five. It is argued that the higher age would give us a more informed and more responsible electorate. As regards the immediate effect, this is probably true. It is almost certainly untrue as regards the ultimate effect. For the first condition of an informed and responsible electorate is that the electors should take an intelligent interest in public affairs; they are much more likely to do so if they form the habit young; and they are much more likely to form the habit young if they get the vote when they are young. This consideration is decisive, in our view, in favour of the earlier franchise age.

The success of the Franchise Bill is so assured that we need not perhaps discuss the issue further. In Parliament we are likely to hear much more about plural voting than about either equal franchise or twenty-one *versus* twenty-five. The woman's suffrage movement will achieve its final triumph with a bloodless victory.

This tranquillity of acquiescence is in marked contrast to the passionate emotions, both of enthusiasm and of aversion, which the subject aroused as late as twenty years ago. It used to be common ground to ardent advocates and ardent opponents of Woman's Suffrage that deep, far-reaching social issues were involved. The whole question of woman's place in society was felt somehow to be at stake. Was the proper rôle of woman that of subordination to man or that of equality with him? Was her proper "place" the home or the world at large? Should she be confined as rigidly as possible to domestic duties, or to such outside work—invariably of a menial description—as tradition had recognized to be appropriate to her sex; and should her whole training, physical, mental, and moral, from childhood up be such as to fit her for these duties and for these alone? Should she be regarded, in short, primarily as a specialized creature, with specialized vocations, a specialized training, even a specialized morality? Or should she be regarded primarily as a human being, with free access as a human being to every facility and opportunity open to men? The question of the vote was felt to be only the central battle-ground in the controversy upon this larger and

vaguer issue. The advocates of Woman's Suffrage doubtless desired the vote for its own sake. But it was as a symbol, and to some extent as an instrument for effecting a more general emancipation, that votes for women evoked a passionate intensity of devotion such as no other cause in our generation has inspired.

What, then, are we to infer from the final triumph of the Woman's Suffrage cause? Does it signify the final triumph of the feminist idea? Does the absence of serious opposition to the present Bill mark the disappearance of serious opposition to the principle of the open door for women in every sphere of life? Or is there perhaps another explanation? Is the acquiescence in equal franchise due more to a growing scepticism as to the importance of votes than to a growing conviction as to the justice of women's rights? Have we really rounded seraglio point? Or have we merely concluded that votes do not matter very much?

While franchise equality moves forward to its goal with an almost mechanical momentum, there are signs of a definite anti-feminist reaction in other quarters. Of these signs by far the most serious is the decision of the leading London hospitals which have hitherto admitted women to their courses to exclude them for the future. The recent adoption of this policy by the Charing Cross, King's College, and Westminster Hospitals completes a process which has been at work for some years. The pre-war position, under which women could only study medicine at the Royal Free Hospital for Women, will now be virtually restored. Since the Royal Free Hospital has accommodation for only about half the number of women who are at present studying medicine at London University, it is evident that the closing of the doors by the other hospitals will mean in practice a serious restriction of the supply of women doctors.

Indeed, this is one of the objects of the exclusion. The medical profession is held to be overcrowded; and the most desirable means of diminishing the overcrowding is, in the opinion of the hospital authorities, to curtail the supply of women entrants. This trade-unionist consideration is supported by an amazing hotch-potch of obscurantism, levity and prudery. Athletes, it is seriously urged, tend to avoid co-educational hospitals, so that the athletic prestige of a hospital suffers from the admission of women. The presence of women students is felt by the men to be embarrassing. And, finally, of course, we have the argument that many of the women marry later, so that their training is wasted from the professional point of view.

This last argument might have some degree of temporary force, if the teaching facilities of the hospitals were at present seriously overstrained. But the attempts to argue that this is so are manifestly half-hearted, and extremely unconvincing. It seems rather to be the complaint of some of the protagonists of exclusion that the malign presence of women makes it difficult for a hospital to attract enough male students. For the rest, the prominence of the athletic argument supplies the measure of the essential frivolity of a most retrograde proceeding.



For what proceeding could be more retrograde? To thwart and hamper the entry of women into medicine of all professions! Why, the very logic of those who, repelled by a doctrinaire egalitarianism, stress the importance and the subtly far-reaching nature of sex differences points straight to medicine as an appropriate calling for women. Women and the care of the sick—the association is immemorial. Is it reasonable to suppose that the characteristics which make women better than men at the humble work of nursing, have no value at all for the multifarious duties of medical practice? We publish this week an article by Miss Vera Brittain suggesting that, if the medical profession had been less dominated by masculine tradition, more headway might have been made than has been made against the ravages of maternal mortality. Who will be bold enough to dismiss this suggestion as fantastic? But we do not need to rely on such disquieting speculations to establish the case for women doctors. Experience has shown that the mere fact that a doctor is a woman is often of the utmost value in securing the timely communication of intimate physical details by a woman or a shy young girl.

An adequate supply of women doctors, with the best possible training, represents, in short, an important public need. The London hospitals have set themselves, more or less deliberately, to obstruct this supply. In this they are guilty, not merely of anti-feminist prejudice, but of anti-social conduct. They are false to their trust—the advancement of the Public Health. It is not clear whether London University, which has appointed a committee to inquire into the matter, has any power to interfere. But public opinion has great power, and it is to be hoped that it will express itself in a decided way.

## NAVAL COURTS-MARTIAL

PERSONS learned in the history of legal procedure might conceivably guess at the influences that have fashioned the procedure of a modern naval court-martial. It may be that the court of arms, the constable and marshal, important in Tudor times, was responsible for the first design of naval and military courts-martial, and it may be also that this old court, like the Admiralty court, was affected by foreign influences which percolated into its derivative courts in the field. A naval court-martial is certainly different in its constitution and procedure from any civil court; the probability is that the procedure by which Drake tried Doughty has been added to, amended, and modified, in the characteristically unscientific British manner, and that the modern naval court-martial is the outcome.

Generally a court-martial is called when the captain of a ship reports that an offence has been committed, which is too serious for him to deal with summarily. The authority to whom the report is transmitted is then called the Convening Authority, and the captain of the ship is generally the prosecutor. The letter in which he reported the case and stated the charges that could be laid against the offender is called the circumstantial letter. This document is the starting-point of the proceedings: it is communicated to the prisoner as soon as possible; and the indictment is drafted from it. In the case of courts-martial ordered by the Admiralty, at the request of officers who

desire that justice shall be done to them, the procedure is slightly different. The best example of a court-martial called for these reasons is that of Sir Robert Calder. In a letter dated November 18th, 1805, the Lords Commissioners informed the Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth that Sir Robert Calder had asked that an inquiry might be made into his conduct on the day following the engagement off Finisterre, and that they considered that a court-martial ought to be assembled both for making a full inquiry into Sir Robert's conduct, "And to try him for not having done his utmost to renew the said engagement. . . ." Sir Robert's letter of complaint was enclosed and the commander-in-chief was ordered to assemble the court. This document is not so specifically drawn as the ordinary circumstantial letter, and it is only the Admiralty which gives these wide terms of reference to a court-martial.

But when the request, or order, to convene a court-martial reaches the commander-in-chief, the procedure is uniform. He at once appoints a president of the court; unless the Admiralty has already done so, he also appoints a deputy judge advocate. This second officer's duties will be described after the president's. It is the president's duty to assemble his own court; as soon, therefore, as he has been appointed, no officer, junior to the president, of a rank eligible to sit as a member of the court, may leave his ship without permission. On the morning of the day selected for the court-martial, the president receives a list of officers eligible for the duty; he notifies the officers he selects by a signal which need not be made until one hour before the court opens. The members of the court go to the ship where the court is to be held and are received ceremonially: the president must come last, in order that the other officers of the court may receive him suitably.

The president and the court are sworn in by the deputy judge advocate, who is the court's legal assessor. He is empowered to cross-question, or recall, witnesses and to do everything necessary for elucidating the case, but he must "maintain an entirely impartial position. He shall not act as prosecutor." Most of the preliminary work has been done by this officer. The prisoner is brought before the court by the provost marshal: those whom the prisoner has asked to assist him sit beside him; they have a very different status from that of the counsel for the defence in a civil case, as will appear later. One of the many peculiarities of a naval court-martial is that a member of the court is not debarred from being a witness by the mere fact that he is on the court. Unless the accused objects, one of his judges may be called upon for evidence, cross-questioned, and then sent back to resume his seat among the judges. The prosecutor is in the same position: he also may be called upon to give evidence as to facts, may be examined by the court, cross-examined by the accused, and then return to the conduct of the case.

The prosecutor makes no opening speech, but calls his witnesses, and endeavours to substantiate the charge by cross-examination. The court, and the deputy judge advocate, put supplementary questions if they wish: the accused cross-examines. This brings us to the powers granted to his friends or legal advisers. In no court in the world are such elaborate precautions taken against the insinuations of skilled advocacy. The prisoner's friend may cross-question the witnesses direct, if the president permits him, but the permission may be refused and no reason given. If permission is refused, the prisoner's friend may advise the prisoner what questions to ask, but no more. No King's Counsel, however skilful, could harry a witness under such a procedure. When the prosecution has concluded its case—the prosecutor does not address the court in support of the charges—the court adjourns in order that

the prisoner may have time to prepare his defence. This defence is the nearest approach to advocacy that the court allows. The prisoner may address the court, or present a written statement. If the prisoner's statement is in writing, his friend or legal adviser may read it aloud; but may not on any account address the court on the facts of the case. Neither the defence nor the prosecution may be enforced by forensic oratory. As a rule, therefore, the accused's statement of defence is a summary of what he intends to bring out by the examination of his witnesses. When it has been read, he, or his adviser, calls his witnesses; and when the last witness has been called and examined the court is cleared for finding. The judge advocate collects the votes, beginning with the junior member of the court: the votes of the majority decide; "when, on a division, votes are equal, the construction most favourable to the accused is to prevail." The prisoner is brought back into court when the judges are ready; he knows whether he has been found guilty or not guilty by the position of his sword upon the table before him.

One word should be added. Civilian students of history are inclined to remember only the very severe judgments at times passed by naval courts-martial. The cases of Byng, Sir Robert Calder, and others linger in the mind. Naval officers have an unbounded confidence in the justice and leniency of their own courts: they are, after all, best qualified to judge.

## WHAT THE MOND CONFERENCE MIGHT DO

**T**HE two parties to the conference of employers and Trade-Union representatives summoned by Sir Alfred Mond have now tabled the subjects which they wish to discuss. To those who are most closely in touch with the detailed work of management under modern industrial conditions, the list is disappointing. No one imagines that these conversations are the prelude to an industrial Utopia. But, even under existing conditions, the conference might issue in a great advance in co-operation between all the parties to industry provided those concerned not only mean business, but also appreciate the directions in which practical results may be achieved. Unfortunately, there are indications that neither of these conditions are wholly realized.

In reply to the original "démarche" by Mr. Citrine, the Confederation of Employers' Organizations doubted the value of a general conference on the ground that "it is in the individual works that the spirit of mutual understanding must find its ultimate expression in practical results." This contention was immediately echoed by Mr. J. H. Thomas because "what is suitable to one industry would not be suitable to another." Subsequently, there has been a tendency to accept this attitude as axiomatic. It is assumed that a conference of this description must limit itself to the discussion of broad principles. The working out and application of details will necessarily be left to individual industries.

The subjects of discussion which appear upon the agenda support this view. They include Works Councils, Publicity, Rationalization, Unemployment, Housing—all the old, and the new, phrases of vast content and inexact definition around which men in public positions have been weaving pious platitudes for a decade. There is no reason to hope that the Mond Conference will achieve more than any of the other half-dozen of "movements" which have been solemnly fathered on the business world since 1914,

unless its members can adopt a new angle of approach to the problem of industrial relations.

Broadly speaking, that problem is a problem, not of policy, but of administration and management. There is little fault to find with the intentions of either party. It is their incapacity to translate those intentions into action which makes the mischief. The average Board of Directors are usually quite well-meaning people, kind in their personal relationships and seriously troubled by the obvious failures of Manchester economics. Their intentions towards their employees are excellent. But in practice they are quite unable to secure that these intentions are reflected in the daily life of the factories which they are presumed to control. They cannot understand, for instance, that the theory of competition, when applied individually and in detail in the interstices of a large organization, inevitably creates an atmosphere in which serious co-operation is impossible, and in which toadyism and petty tyranny are apt to make life miserable for the majority of those concerned.

Similarly, the responsible officials of the great Trade Unions are not men who want to burn the house down in order to warm their hands. They are more likely to sacrifice their positions in trying to restrain their members from striking than in encouraging them to do so. But the necessity of maintaining the membership of what are, after all, voluntary associations, complicates their position. The lack of any recognized method of adjusting the conflict between the craft and industrial principles of organization leads to endless demarcation disputes. The daily petty friction in the shops, and the futile attitude of many employers when trouble arises, tie their hands.

There is a single reason for this situation. Great Britain is the oldest of the industrial countries. "Experience," established ways of doing things, are deeply rooted in the traditions of her machine economy. But that economy has been profoundly altered during the last twenty-five years by the inevitable drive of technical progress towards larger and larger units of control. And, while there are many honourable exceptions, the consequences of this growth in the size of the typical industrial unit have never been fairly faced by either side.

Immediately a concern develops beyond the limits within which the responsible owner or manager can exercise his personal influence, the whole employer-employee relationship is fundamentally changed. Sir Alfred Mond has recently deplored the loss of the "personal touch." In dealing with hundreds, it is effective; in dealing with thousands, the personal touch can only issue in personal touchiness. Kindliness and courtesy are essential in all human relationships. But in any large-scale organization they can only be secured and rendered effective if they are used in the interpretation of a recognized system of organized justice. Students of the question have been aware for some years that employers and managers in Great Britain are, in many cases, completely ignorant of the technique by which such a system is established and maintained. Trade-Union leaders are essentially suspicious of the discipline which it postulates.

The greatest obstacle to a wider diffusion of knowledge on the subject is the insistence on differences between various industries which are assumed to be fundamental. This attitude is in direct contradiction of the whole experience derived from serious experiments in labour administration over the last twenty-five years. Details of wage arrangements may vary from industry to industry. All pension schemes are not alike. There are many effective forms of joint consultation. But the common principles underlying the successful control and inspiration of large bodies of men, whatever the purpose for which their co-operation is required, are of world-wide application. And,



moreover, the detailed methods by which those principles are applied present no serious divergences between Australia and Aberdeen.

Gradually, business administrators are beginning to come together for the analysis and discussion of these questions. In any such assembly, drawn from a dozen different trades, it will be found that the problems are the same, in detail as well as in the large. Engagement, dismissal, timekeeping, discipline, promotion, selection, superannuation—all the processes dealing with the individual—are essentially similar whether he is going to make bread-nougths or doughnuts. It is faulty adjustment in these details of daily life in the factory which is responsible for nine-tenths of our serious industrial trouble. The minute discontents caused by petty worries and daily friction pile up until they issue in a large-scale dispute, ostensibly about wages or hours.

In the meanwhile, emphasis on the differences between trades, instead of upon their similarities, stifles research, experiment, and education. It is a symptom of that excessive individualism, that reliance on "rule of thumb," which is handicapping the development of scientific methods of industrial management in this country, not only on the labour side, but in almost every direction. The argument that "my business is different" is the first *alibi* invariably set up by the self-satisfied administrator when he is urged to improve his methods or to learn from the experience of others.

Of well-substantiated experiments there is no lack. Such a book as "Personnel Management,"\* which is practically unknown in Great Britain, outlines a complete system of staff administration. Every principle, method, and form which it describes has been applied with success by one or more large businesses. They would seem fantastically idealistic to many English employers. There is an organization in New York known as the Industrial Relations Counsellors Incorporated. It has specialized for some years on the investigation and analysis of the methods of any firm where faulty industrial relations have been allowed to develop. It has built up an enormous practice by successful adjustment of case after case, drawn from practically every industry in the United States. There are many concerns in Great Britain where admirable relations have been established and maintained over long periods. They are in no way different to the rest. They trade under fierce competition. They are not sentimentalists; nor have they money to burn.

It is true that these methods can only be applied in the individual works. But that very individuality makes the slow infiltration of knowledge and enlightenment by trial and error inadequate to our present urgent need. In the majority of instances it is not ill-will which is at the back of our troubles, but ignorance and conservatism. What is wanted is an authoritative lead.

Such a lead those concerned in the present discussions could undoubtedly give. But they have got to abandon the attitude that industries are different, if they wish to do so. They must not be satisfied with broad generalizations. They should take steps to examine the available evidence. Then, if they can, they should issue an agreed statement laying down categorically and in detail the principles and methods of staff administration which, in any large concern, must form the basis of successful and permanent co-operation.

Such a statement could not bind either party to any prescribed action. But it would have an immense and far-reaching effect in countless factories, because it would provide every employer and every trade-union leader with a yardstick by which to measure his own efforts. It would

demonstrate once and for all that care, time, and money devoted to the *morale* of the working force are not the hobbies of sentimentalists and idealists. But that, on the contrary, in the opinion of the authoritative leaders of capital and labour alike, they are the only practical basis on which a united national effort can issue in recovered trade and a higher standard of living for all.

Of the co-operation of the leaders of labour there is little doubt. Mr. Bevin placed his signature to the report of the Mackenzie Commission on Industrial Relations in the United States and Canada. Mr. Citrine, Mr. Pugh, and others, have shown by their public utterances the way in which their minds are tending. Is it too much to hope that Sir Alfred Mond and his associates will take advantage of their opportunity? Or are they too important to get down to these practical details, too cautious to declare roundly to their fellows that, in Great Britain, management as well as labour has something to learn?

L. URWICK.

## LIFE AND POLITICS

WRITING at the end of the first day of the Liberal Industrial Conference, I may record the impression that it is going well in the sense that the feeling of the delegates is emphatically against the sort of criticism designed to take the point out of the committee's proposals. The discussions by all accounts have been businesslike and well informed, and really expressive of an earnest desire to hammer out an enlightened and progressive policy for the future. Shipley was very much *contra mundum*, and one of the most striking things was the very generous and broad-minded way in which Mr. Runciman handled the report and the concrete proposals. What no one can understand is, why the Press have been excluded. There seems to be no point in this at all, and the only result will be that the conference will attract much less attention than it would otherwise have done. Many of the speeches—for instance, that of Mr. Keynes on financial reorganization—are essentially of the kind that need to be fully reported and carefully studied at leisure. I do not know whether this official lapse of judgment is due to a nervous fear of dissensions or scenes, but if that is the case privacy was entirely unnecessary. A case could be made out for holding the Land Convention in private, but that precedent should not have been applied to the industrial conference, which needs as much publicity as it can get.

Most people I meet have been following the proceedings of the latest Disarmament Conference at Geneva with a sort of weary disgust. There are, it is true, some people who are by mental habit so keenly interested in the machinery of the League that their requirements are satisfied by discussions of how it works—or does not work. Perhaps the chief vice of public life is the belief in the efficacy of passing (or not passing) resolutions. A resolution passed, even a resolution debated, is a deed done. This delusion is apparently fostered into an all-consuming passion when the nations meet at Geneva to discuss and again to discuss disarmament, that is, to exorcise the problem out of the way by the incantation of resolutions. The plain man, for whom alone I have any authority to speak, could understand the Russians. Whatever one may think of their motives—these certainly include a malicious desire to show up the insincerity of the European States—the Russians, like the Germans, have an understandable case. "This is a disarmament conference? Very well, let us all disarm." Horror of the machinery lovers and the armed realists. The Russians with the fatuous Slav sim-

\* "Personnel Management." By W. Scott and R. C. Clothier. (A. W. Shaw Co.)

plicity returned to the charge. "If you won't disarm—we thought that was the idea—why not agree to cut down our armaments by half all round?" Again a loud outraged "hush" like the noise people make to suppress an interruption at a meeting. I, too, am a simple person, and this Russian proposal seems to me as excellent as it would seem to a prisoner to escape out of an unlocked door. Well, if the Russians had no other purpose than to expose the sham of European professions they have done it. None of the heavily armed countries has the faintest intention of disarming, except perhaps (Lord Cushendun's revived offer to America) where money can be saved by scrapping more or less obsolete armament. So the pitiful game goes on at Geneva, while the Powers that won the war expect Germany to sit quiet forever, under the quite cynical refusal to implement a definite undertaking. Germany was disarmed as the preliminary to general disarmament, and no amount of diplomatic Jesuitry can get away from the fact.

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The debate on the necessitous areas in South Wales was depressing not only because the condition of many of the mining villages is genuinely tragic, but because such helplessness was shown by the Government. I am not myself disposed to belabour Mr. Chamberlain for his supposed heartlessness: it would be absurd to describe that strange man as heartless. I think he was the only speaker in the debate who noted the real tragedy. It is a tragedy not so much of actual want as of hopelessness and lies in the fact that many thousands of once happy and independent workers are becoming "heartbroken" by despairing idleness. The Government has to bear a very definite share of the blame for the collapse of industry in the Welsh coal-field; they are partly to blame for the settlement which meant the slow or quick destruction of the basis of life for many a valley and village; they are to blame now for looking on, more or less sympathetically, at the gradual decay of organized civilized life in a once prosperous country. It is all very well for Front Bench Olympians to refuse to be hustled by well-meaning if over-emphatic Press clamour. Mr. Chamberlain never has any difficulty in keeping his head; it would do him no harm to lose it now and then. When all is said the Ministers responsible cannot be absolved from passing by in official reserve on the other side.

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There is something characteristic of the oddity of London traditions that a great insurance corporation should be named after a seventeenth-century coffee-house keeper. One imagines that the original Lloyd would have been considerably astonished if he could have strolled into the City on Saturday and seen the pageantry when the commercial palace called by his name was opened. The good man might well wonder what he had done to deserve it. The new Lloyd's is indeed a splendid building. Everything changes in the City except the width of the streets; even Wren could not get permission to make the crooked ways straight and wide. As the City is rebuilt we see on all hands great new buildings towering above lanes of mediæval span. The proportions of New Lloyd's cannot be realized: one is pushed too near to it to see it properly. The "Room" is an astonishing place; certainly the handsomest and, I think, the largest hall in the City. It wears the white marble of a blameless life. I was interested on Saturday to hear the King reminding us that the building is on the site—or part of the site—of the basilica of Roman London. Londinium drew its living from sea-borne trade just as London does, and the new Lloyd's is in the true historic succession from the merchants and shippers of that earlier commercial Empire.

B\*

I hope that Mr. Neville Chamberlain will see fit to refuse his consent to the building of huge blocks of ten-storey flats on the site of the Foundling Hospital. Those who are anxious to save the Hospital, or at the least to use the site for some fine public purpose, found some consolation in the news that the London County Council had included the district in a Town Planning scheme. They were miserably deluded, for the Council, without anyone knowing a word about it, had passed the plans for these flats and shops. But for the fact that it was necessary to advertise it, the building might have been begun before anyone knew that the Council, that zealous guardian of the public amenities, had sold the pass. One had hoped that the (attempted) destruction of Waterloo Bridge would have satisfied the Council's appetite for vandalism for a time. In its eagerness to show its superiority to mere considerations of beauty and historic interest the L.C.C. has even gone out of its way to give permission for the buildings to be higher than the law prescribes. I was never very optimistic about the possibility of raising about a million pounds to preserve the Foundling Hospital and its surroundings. One did not quite expect to find the County Council rushing to the assistance of blind commercial greed. This is a test case. If the Foundling is destroyed, then it will be difficult to keep the hands of the developers off the squares, and any beautiful old building in London that is not safeguarded is only safe so long as it does not pay the dividend hunters to pull it down.

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I listened (by wireless) with some emotion last week to the touching story which Mr. Baldwin told at the Master Mariners' dinner about "Charlie." According to Mr. Baldwin, Charlie was a war hero who, arriving at Fleetwood straight from hospital jumped into a lifeboat and helped to rescue a schooner's crew before going home to supper. No one had heard of Charlie before in Fleetwood, and unfortunately no one has heard of him yet. The reporters have been chasing about Fleetwood ever since hot on Charlie's track. The latest report is that there ain't no sich person—at Fleetwood anyway. Patient investigators have unearthed the names of the lifeboat crew that went out for the only time during the war, and though there is a "Charlie" among them, his wife—he is at sea—asserts that none of Mr. Baldwin's pathetic details fit her husband. It was really too bad of Mr. Baldwin to raise false hopes in the breast of Fleetwood of the discovery of a local hero. I regret the unworthy thought that Mr. Baldwin invented Charlie, but I think he owes us a word of explanation. I relinquish Charlie with regret, and a shade of annoyance, for I do not want to be deprived of my childlike trust in the gospel truth of everything Mr. Baldwin says. It is very unsettling. Can Charlie's other name be Harris?

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All journalists who do the ordinary work of newspapers—I mean the description of public events, "interviewing," and "specials" generally—ought to study the delightful translation of the "Cose Viste," by Ugo Ojetti, which has just come out. Ojetti, who is now editor of that fine newspaper the *CORRIERE* of Milan, is a master of this difficult craft. He calls himself a reporter, and I should say that he is the best reporter in Europe. There is no doubt, I think, that the general literary level of reporting work in our journals nowadays—with a few obvious exceptions—is well below the Continental standard. A report of a procession, or any big popular event in the best French newspapers is usually the work of an artist in selection and expression. The thing is whipped up into a most palatable confection. In England literary form in this everyday journalism has probably fallen off in the last twenty years. The coming of the snippety Press is one bad influence: the journalist



needs room to turn round in if he is to do good work, and the penny journals cannot find space for carefully considered writing. As a journalist I read Ojetti's delicate and vivid sketches with admiration and despair. An "interview" conducted by him results in a penetrating and sympathetic study of character as expressed in word and gesture. As D'Annunzio remarks in the preface, he is "all eyes and ears"; but there is a singularly agile and well-cultivated brain at work also. There is an old and rather foolish dispute about the difference between journalism and literature. Ojetti writes both at once. If he goes to describe the illuminations of St. Peter's, for instance, he turns out a thing of enduring charm which does not cease to be a report.

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Glancing at the hoardings while waiting for a train I noted two examples of advertiser's English. "The most phenomenal choir in the world" and (this from an undertaker's advertisement) "distance no object." The latter is an amusingly meaningless phrase: doubtless a shorthand corruption of "no objection to going long distances." A third met my eye in the newspaper: "Flat painter's brushes." What sort of brushes do stout painters use?

KAPPA.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### SUTTEE

SIR,—Sir Evan Cotton does less than justice to Mr. Edward Thompson's valuable monograph on Suttie in the review published in your issue of March 24th. Suttie is unfortunately a question of grave importance at the present time. It is useless to attempt to disguise this fact by saying "The truth is that suttie is no longer discussed in Anglo-Indian circles of a normal type. Officials will tell you that cases occasionally come to their notice." The matter is far too serious for such treatment. I was myself Commissioner of the Patna Division in the years 1904 and 1905, when two of the cases quoted by Mr. Thompson occurred, and I well remember the intense religious enthusiasm they aroused throughout the countryside. And the records of the Courts in India since that date prove the persistence of this terrible practice and its encouragement by an "unscrupulous priesthood," in spite of all the endeavours of the authorities to suppress it. I believe there is a case now pending in one of the provincial Courts in which some sixteen accused are charged with the abetment of this crime.

It is to be regretted that Mr. Gandhi's efforts to cope with such evils as these should be so gravely prejudiced by the failure of so many of Sir Evan's and my own friends to discuss and denounce them. To say that "if Mr. Thompson escapes castigation, it will only be because he happens also to be the author of 'The Other Side of the Medal'" is to blind readers to the obvious fact that both monographs have the same foundation in Mr. Thompson's deep affection for the people of India and solicitude for their future, which is reinforced by experience and research and expressed with a lambent sincerity which contributes in no small measure to the value of his work. Miss Mayo's grievous travesty of modern India would not have received the attention given to it had not many of her statements of fact been true, and India's friends would be better employed in vigorous support of the campaign for social reform than in denying the existence of the evils against which it is waged.—Yours, &c.,

P. C. LYON.

Oriel College, Oxford.  
March 27th, 1928.

SIR,—If Sir Evan Cotton, who reviews "Suttie" in THE NATION of to-day, will look up the TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT, March 15th, he will (on page 181, column 3, thirteen lines from the beginning of the article) come on the track of one of these *rari nantes in gurgite vasto*. I doubt if they are so uncommon as he thinks.—Yours, &c.,

March 24th, 1928.

HAROLD W. H. HELBY.

## CHARITABLE RELIEF—PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

SIR,—As a subscriber to many forms of charitable relief certain disquieting elements force themselves upon me as illustrating the expensiveness and inadequacy and sometimes severe hardship entailed by arrangements which are perhaps inseparable from private and voluntary undertakings. Canvassing for subscriptions and donations seems to constitute a serious and sometimes ruinous charge upon the funds obtained. Then in order to obtain relief for individuals the voting system entails immense labour and expense either to the unfortunates seeking relief or to those who interest themselves in individual cases. And finally there comes the thought of those who after incurring expenses which they cannot afford get nothing for their pains.

One extremely valuable charity is the Surgical Aid Society, but the numerous applications from humble people (sometimes accompanied by stamped envelopes) which one is compelled to disregard are extremely disquieting. In this sphere it would seem that relief ought to be universal when its necessity is certified by a qualified practitioner, as it must be for the sufferer to be eligible for relief by the Society. This Society is so admirably managed that it is used by Approved Societies under the Health Insurance Acts, though not all of these are in a position to give this form of benefit. It is a sad thought that the most necessitous are likely to be those who are not relieved.

A charity which is the subject of perpetual struggle is the Putney Home for Incurables. It would be extremely interesting to know what is the total bill for printing and postage (not to mention voluntary labour) incurred annually in promoting candidatures, most of which must be unsuccessful. This home, however, provides amenities which an institution dependent on public support would probably not be able to give, and much is provided in infirmaries supported by public funds which deal with cases similar to those received in the Putney Home.

Large contributions are now made to hospitals by Approved Societies, and to that extent these institutions are State aided. Perhaps as this system extends some measure of State control may be obtained. In connection with hospitals the subscriber is often appalled by the expensive volumes of Annual Reports which he receives and promptly relegates to the waste-paper-basket. Here, surely, is a practice which urgently calls for retrenchment.

Another reflection which occurs to the habitual subscriber is that in anonymity there may be more of the wisdom of the serpent than of the harmlessness of the dove. It would seem that charitable organizers starting a fresh enterprise invariably apply to the same old gang who are already carrying the burden of existing charities. And they are wise in their generation. He who has helped once is more likely to help again than is the total abstainer. One advantage of public control would be that sundry stingy and wealthy abstainers might be conscripted into the ranks of compulsory subscribers, although they may never learn in that school that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

—Yours, &c.,

SENEX.

## THE OUTLAWRY OF WAR

SIR,—Mr. Conwill-Evans is doing the Kellogg Note a disservice by confusing it with the proposals of the outlawry of war school.

I heartily agree with all Mr. Evans says as to the importance of the American proposals and their compatibility with the Covenant. If rightly handled these proposals may form a bridge between the United States and the members of the League in the task of assuring world peace, which can never be secured without the co-operation of America.

But I would respectfully point out to Mr. Evans that this has nothing to do with the subject of my letters on which he animadverts, namely, the refusal of Mr. Chas. C. Morrison and your outlawry of war correspondents to face the problems of: (1) Distinguishing defence from aggression; (2) Solidarity of the law-abiding nations against the aggressor.—Yours, &c.,

ROTH WILLIAMS.

March 26th, 1928.

## DISESTABLISHMENT AND FREEDOM

SIR,—Men do not gather figs of thistles; and on the two final pages of his new book, "Christianity and the State," the Bishop of Manchester alarms himself needlessly by attempting to deal with a constitutional question while entirely failing to consider the constitutional precedents or to show any sign of acquaintance with Sir William Anson's monumental work on the "Law and Custom of the Constitution," which would have lightened his darkness.

Dr. Temple imagines that if the Church of England were disestablished it would hold its property tied up by a trust deed to a particular system of doctrine, and so would not be effectively free.

History teaches the contrary.

The inconvenience that may sometimes be caused to a non-Established Church by the provisions of a trust deed was brought out more than eighty years ago by the decision of the House of Lords in the Lady Hewley Charity case in 1843. This case did not deal with any chapels, but, as pointed out by the Solicitor-General in the House of Commons, it "gave hints to parties of what they might do" with regard to certain chapels.

Mr. Gladstone had fully perceived all the bearings of this case, and accordingly, in speeding the Church of Ireland upon its future course as a Disestablished Church, he provided it with a flexible (as opposed to a rigid) trust deed, and thus gave it (in addition to the freedom from State dictation in its internal corporate life which is enjoyed by every voluntary association) the amplest liberty of altering the trusts of its Church property without any further application to Parliament. Mr. McKenna's Welsh Church Act followed the same plan, and it will undoubtedly be followed again in any English Disestablishment Act. A problem which still perplexes Dr. Temple to the point of causing him to suggest "moral rebellion" against the State was solved by Mr. Gladstone more than half a century ago.

Any reader inclined to investigate the point (and I hope there will be many such) may obtain for 6d. from H.M. Stationery Office, Kingsway, W.C., a copy of the Welsh Church Act of 1914, and may see in subsection (2) of Section 3 a trust deed of Church property which gives exactly what the Bishop desires.

The Bishop's book is a vivid illustration of the danger of theorizing without full and careful study of the facts bearing upon any point dealt with.—Yours, &c.,

T. BENNETT.

15, Hulse Road, Southampton.

## ROMAN CATHOLIC MODERNISM

SIR,—If Romanism is a cheerful religion, then it must have departed from the ideas of Tertullian, St. Thomas Aquinas, &c. Gibbon states Tertullian as saying, "How shall I admire, how laugh, when I behold so many philosophers blushing in red-hot flames with their deluded scholars, so many poets trembling before the tribunal, so many, &c."

And as quoted by Julian Huxley, St. Thomas says, "That the saints may enjoy their beatitude more richly, a perfect sight is granted them of the punishment of the damned."

Is this the heaven of the Catholics or is it not? I should say that even Hilaire Belloc would not enjoy watching Wells in flames as the *summum bonum* of happiness for eternity.

Dean Inge is a sort of Platonist, a follower of Plotinus, what are called the "New Platonists." Gibbon has a word on this: "As they agreed with the Christians in a few mysterious points of faith, they attacked the remainder of their theological system with all the fury of civil war." The Catholic doctrine is still "no compromise," and Protestantism is disintegrating before our eyes. If any of the protagonists are cheerful, it must be the people of science in these days.—Yours, &c.,

E. HILL.

Greystone Lodge, Leamington Spa.

March 18th, 1928.

## CATHOLICS IN THE MIDDLE AGES

SIR,—May another reader comment on the letter of Miss Godden which appears in your March 17th issue? Miss Godden protests against a strong depreciation of the Middle Ages: but does she not go to an opposite extreme, as open to criticism as the one she criticizes? No reasonable person will deny the nobility—spiritual and temporal—of Catholicism and of its saints and heroes. The criticism of mediæval Catholicism does not consist in denial of that nobility, but in pointing to the evils of the undue dominance of the Church over civil life, and its too great preoccupation with worldly matters.

As it happens, this is illustrated in the cases of two of the very men mentioned by Miss Godden: Sir Thomas More and St. Thomas Aquinas. Both were men noble intellectually and spiritually. Nevertheless, both of them advocated burning heretics at the stake or otherwise putting people to death for difference of belief. Does not that fact reveal the distinction which Miss Godden overlooks?—the distinction, that is, between the spiritual nobility of the Church and its temporal corruptions. The former produced the *Imitatio Christi* and numberless other undying glories of devotion; but the other produced the *autos de fé* of the Inquisition. That is what is "frightening" about the Middle Ages: the fierce intolerance due to undue claims of the Church to dominate civil society. Miss Godden says the Middle Ages were not "more pre-eminently Catholic" than "the present age" or than that of Constantine. What an extraordinary statement! In the Middle Ages dissenters from the hierarchy were civil outlaws. Are they so now? And is it not a "frightening" idea that an expression of disbelief in a scholastic dogma (e.g., Transubstantiation) should involve peril of death by fire and infamy to the third generation?

By all means let us reverence the beauties of spiritual Catholicism; but it would be a "frightening" idea to go back to the writ *de hæretico comburendo*, and other exaggerations of mediæval ecclesiasticism. Were they "merrie"?—Yours, &c.,

J. W. POYNTER.

Highbury, N.5.

## "THE WILD DUCK"

SIR,—In his very kind notice of the performance of "The Wild Duck" by the London School of Economics Dramatic Society, Mr. Birrell observed that I produced the play "as if it were almost a farce." The remark was clearly intended as a compliment, and I have been wondering how many of your readers will resent the implied judgment on the character of Ibsen's much-discussed drama. Whether one agrees or disagrees must depend on how that word "almost" is expanded.

"The Wild Duck" stands out from the other plays of Ibsen's later years, but the difference does not lie, as is sometimes suggested, in the plot. It is not that here the bourgeois is the hero and the idealist the villain. The theme is, in essentials, the same as that of "A Doll's House." A happy marriage, built on a lie and fed on illusions, is shattered by the truth, which proves to be too much for the gross egoism of the husband. Gregers is Christine Linde underlined, his "true marriage" the "miracle of miracles" which we know will never come to pass. Ibsen was, at this time, constantly reminding us that rule-of-thumb idealism, insensitive to the reactions of human nature, is a blind, destructive, and unfruitful force.

The difference lies not in the matter, but in the manner. Ibsen boasted that he did not write parts, but created human beings. His audiences, though conscious of the spirit of the dramatist-creator brooding over the theatre, expected the people on the stage to live their own lives and speak their own thoughts. In the first Act of "The Wild Duck" all seemed as usual, though the Chamberlains behaved queerly at times. But in reality Ibsen had played them a trick. These were not human beings, but puppets, and he held the strings firmly in his hands. In the second Act he began to give an occasional mischievous jerk, and the figures flung their limbs—or rather their minds—uncouthly in response. As the play progressed, the jerks became more frequent and



more violent, and the entertainment grew to be an exhilarating extravaganza. All the principal characters are puppets, even Hedvig. For instance—"Hjalmar. As sure as I have a mission in life, I mean to fulfil it, now. Hedvig. Oh yes, father, do!" (Obviously a string was twitched here.) But marionettes, though absurd, may be true to life, though ridiculous, may enact a tragedy. That is why "The Wild Duck," though certainly not a farce, is "almost" farcical.

If the producer, realizing all this, tries to "get it across" by making the actors puppets in body, as Ibsen has made them puppets in mind, he will merely destroy the perfect artistic balance of the whole. The most he can do is to suggest that curious mixture of innocence and abandon, characteristic of the Teatro dei Piccoli. And that, incidentally, is the impression which young amateurs, when roused, can most easily convey.—Yours, &c.,

T. H. MARSHALL.

7, Caroline Place.  
March 26th, 1928.

### "CORIOLANUS"

SIR,—My remarks about "Coriolanus" may or may not have been intelligent, but my friend Mrs. Swanwick does me, I think, some slight injustice in quoting as isolated statements what were meant to be links in the chain of a theory, which I was foolishly endeavouring to develop. Of course, millions of women enjoy giving their sons to their country, and persons less intelligent than Shakespeare have always applauded their conduct. Also Shakespeare had the most chameleon-like of minds which enabled him to enter into the point of view of nearly all his characters at the same time and to become at once the most various and objective of authors. My point was that in this particular play he worked too much against the grain, and in consequence his attempt to fudge himself into taking on temporarily the point of view of Volumnia and Valeria failed pretty badly. I suspect Shakespeare of being too intelligent to be taken in even by himself on this occasion. The result is a spiritual barrenness, ill covered by a splendour of syntactical pomp, which I feel nowhere else in Shakespeare. "Coriolanus" does not seem to me an objective essay on politics. I will not repeat the reasons why, in my opinion, Shakespeare embarked on the misguided course that ended in "Coriolanus" as it now exists.—Yours, &c.,

FRANCIS BIRRELL.

### LLOYD'S AND "THE NATION"

SIR,—In going through the Minute Books of Lloyd's we have found an entry of June 30th, 1824, which reads rather quaintly, and may perhaps interest your readers:—

"Editor of THE NATION offers Committee ten shares at £50 each, or a larger number if required. He added 'that a strong sense of right induced him to take up the cause of Lloyd's on the Marine Insurance Bill.' Resolved 'That the Editor of THE NATION be thanked for his attention to the interests of the Subscribers since the Marine Insurance Bill was brought into Parliament, and informed that the Committee decline becoming Proprietors of THE NATION or any other newspaper, and must be satisfied with the support that any of the Editors are pleased to give to the Establishment, whenever circumstances require it.'"

It will be noted that our ancestors a century ago adopted a somewhat more lofty attitude towards newspapers than is customary in this more enlightened time.—Yours, &c.,

C. W., C. E. F.

[This was not, of course, the present NATION, but an earlier journal of the same name.—Ed., THE NATION.]

### MR. AND MRS. SIDNEY WEBB

SIR,—In the present year Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb keep a joint seventieth birthday, and it is proposed to celebrate this event by securing the painting of a joint portrait of them. The range of interests and activities covered by them is very wide and has secured for them the respect and affection of people of many different ways of thinking who have come into contact with them. We hope, therefore, that through your columns we may be assisted in bringing this

project to the notice of many who, otherwise, might not hear of it and who would desire to contribute to it. It is proposed that the portrait shall be placed in the new Founders' Room at the School of Economics, which, among the many creations of the Webbs, holds perhaps a peculiar place in their affections. It is not contemplated, however, that the appeal should be limited in any way to those who are interested only in the School of Economics. We should add that Sir Josiah Stamp has consented to act as Honorary Treasurer of the fund and cheques for the portrait may be sent to him at the School of Economics.—Yours, &c.,

C. S. ADDIS.

HENRIETTA O. BARNETT.

W. H. BEVERIDGE.

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL.

HALDANE.

VIOLET MARKHAM.

GILBERT MURRAY.

HERBERT SAMUEL.

G. BERNARD SHAW.

J. C. STAMP.

ARTHUR STEEL-MAITLAND.

GRAHAM WALLAS.

Houghton Street, Aldwych, W.C.2.

March 27th, 1928.

### WIRELESS RAIN PRODUCTION

SIR,—In your issue of August 4th, 1923, you were good enough to publish a note regarding wireless rain production.

Since that time I have been asked by many people my reasons for advancing the theory that ether waves in the form of wireless will produce rainfall.

I have been forced to hold this belief from observations of the results (in rainfall) following the triangulation of wireless. (Those observations date back for a quarter of a century.)

The laboratory experiments carried out by Aitken have also influenced my opinions. He passed Röntgen rays, ultra-violet rays, and heat rays individually through large jars containing air with a certain amount of moisture. In each case the passage of those rays was at once followed by cloud formation in the jars.

The nuclei on which the moisture condensed were in those experiments negatively charged electrons which were detached from their atomic orbits by those waves of ether, and secondly the remaining atomic systems which by being deprived of one negative electron lost their neutral state and became positively charged masses of vastly greater size than the electrons, and also of much slower movement.

Now when wireless waves are transmitted from centres at distances of three or four hundred miles, where three or more transmitters are used there occurs an area of maximum disturbance, and in that area electrons are liberated which by their rapid movement through the atmosphere gather the moisture first, and when precipitation point has been reached fall in a fine negatively charged rain.

The slower moving positively charged masses then in their turn act as nuclei for condensation of moisture, and we have the conditions of a negatively charged earth surface and a positively charged atmosphere loaded with heavy clouds. Electric discharges follow, and we have heavy downpours and thunderstorms.

In the area of maximum disturbance it is probable that there is an upward tendency of the atmosphere; this, if continued long enough, would be followed by hail storms.

As regards the beam wireless, the conditions are somewhat different. Here we have a concentrated transmission of ethereal stress which corresponds to a lateral gravitation field, the atmosphere within the influence of that beam is then forced toward the source of the stress just as a stone falls to the ground under the action of natural gravitation force.

Should the beam be directed, say, over the Atlantic from Land's End, a gentle moist wind springs up blowing from the west; this gradually gains in force until it develops into an absolute hurricane. The moist air is lifted up on coming in contact with the mountains of Wales and with the upward movement, owing to diminished atmospheric pressure, the air expands, with the expansion comes cooling, with the cooling comes condensation and precipitation, and we have the natural orographic rainfall produced. Supply the needful nuclei by continued broadcasting of wireless waves, continue the beam lateral gravitation stress, and we have the ideal conditions for flooding England.

As long as the upward movement of the air continues, so long will condensation take place, the supply of moist air is unlimited, and the rainfall may be continued for an indefinite period.—Yours, &c.,

W. G. MURRAY.

N.B.—The floods in America and Britain are due probably to orographic rainfall resulting from the use of beam wireless.

Falahill, Mossel Bay, C.P., South Africa.

February 15th, 1928.

### A ROSSETTI MEMORIAL

SIR,—I have read with interest the proposal of the Rector of St. Clement's, Hastings, to ornament his Church with three memorials to Dante Gabriel Rossetti. The suggestion seems to me curious and significant of the attitude of proprietary patriotism so often adopted by provincial towns.

Bloomsbury, Chelsea, Parkhill, and Kelmscott might reasonably claim some credit from Rossetti's residence, but why Hastings? Rossetti's brief visits there were occasioned by the illness of Elizabeth Siddal, and were among the most distressing weeks of his life. It seems to me highly improbable that he ever entered St. Clement's Church except for his wedding—a ceremony despondently undertaken and wholly disastrous in its consequences.

If the Rector of St. Clement's wishes to decorate his church with the painting which Rossetti described as his "blessed white eyesore," it is not for any admirer of Rossetti's real genius to protest, but surely it is too much to expect him to contribute? In any case, it is hard to reconcile such a memorial with Rossetti's well-known detestation of ecclesiastical ornaments.—Yours, &c.,

BIOGRAPHER.

March 16th, 1928.

## MATERNAL MORTALITY AND MEDICAL WOMEN

By VERA BRITTAIN.

A FEW weeks ago the public mind was greatly perturbed over the fact that every year three thousand women die as the result of childbirth. A Conference on Maternal Mortality, to which the Queen sent a message, was held at the Central Hall, Westminster, and in different parts of the country important persons made reference to the subject. One remark especially, made by Mrs. Baldwin in a speech at the Mansion House, was very much quoted and discussed. "I have always felt," she said, "that if Dame Nature had been more generous with her gifts and let us share child-bearing between male and female, this very important subject would have been dealt with long before this." It seems, to say the least of it, curious that throughout the recent controversy on the training of women doctors, hardly a writer has called attention to the connection between this remark and the claims of the medical women students to whom three important London hospitals are about to be closed.

A cynical but honest Frenchman remarked long ago that we have always enough philosophy to support the misfortunes of others. Since midwifery, once a female profession, was lost to women through becoming a subject of study at Universities to which they were not admitted, maternity has been too often the source either of unwholesome sentiment or of jests far from delicate. Enjoying only the satisfactions of parenthood, and eternally free from its pain, its peril, and the majority of its tasks, men both medical and unscientific have found a peculiar mirth in jokes about twins or triplets, about father being left by

mother to mind the screaming infant, and others of an even less edifying type; or they have discovered a vicarious consolation for twinges of conscience in romantically regarding woman as the tragic sex, forever condemned to pay the price of her womanhood in childbed as man is doomed to pay the price of his manhood in battle.

The danger of assuming that either peril is unavoidable is as great in the one case as in the other; nothing is more nullifying than such popular assumptions to all the endeavours of reformers to prevent both calamities. The very type of psychology which believes all war to be noble acclaims the idea of all women as burdened and suffering; the one shibboleth appeals to the primitive instinct of pugnacity, and the other to that equally primitive instinct which seeks to establish superiority by means of protection. In so far as the fact of maternal sacrifice has been accepted as inevitable, it has had its uses in keeping woman the subjugated sex.

The subjugated sex she was bound to find herself so long as the medical profession remained in ignorance of the vital principle of asepsis. A man of average health had a reasonable chance of escaping altogether the bygone perils of hospitals, doctors, and "Sarah Gamps," but woman, with her normal fate of maternity, was a permanent subject for their blind experiments. Until the time of Lister, a natural, and among some primitive races a comparatively painless function, was changed by the bungling of "civilized" mankind into a deadly and crippling disease. Confinements were nothing less than a series of unhygienic catastrophes, any one of which might become the source of lifelong weakness if not of invalidism. So recently as 1847, Dr. Ignaz Philipp Semmelweis discovered that the high mortality among maternity cases in the student wards of the lying-in hospital at Vienna was due to the infected hands of the students, and greatly reduced the death-rate by insisting that each one should wash his hands after every case in a solution of chloride of lime.

The women who actually died of puerperal fever were probably more fortunate than those who passed out of it into insanity or permanent injury. Owing to the absence of anæsthetics, an even greater number never fully recovered from the strain and shock of prolonged labour, while practically every married woman, ignorant of the alleviations of birth-control, suffered physically and mentally from the nervous dread of yet another intolerable confinement. "Let my mind not dwell on what is before me," wrote Elizabeth Fry—by no means a neurotic or egocentric woman—in her Journal before the birth, in 1822, of the youngest of her many children. Until days within the memory of our parents, those responsible for the care of motherhood did little to prevent the fulfilment of the malevolent Jewish Jehovah's inexorable decree: "I will greatly increase thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children."

The improvement in the conditions of childbirth since the middle of the nineteenth century has, of course, been mainly due to the great advance of medicine and surgery in general. To some extent—but much less than many individuals who are out of touch with the mass of the people suppose—it has also been occasioned by the change in men's attitude towards women. Many a man to-day, if he loses his wife, loses not the submissive housekeeper, sick-nurse, and mistress to his comfort who could so easily be replaced, but the equal and unique companion who shares all his interests and his tasks, and who yet can perform also this vital and most necessary task of continuing the race. But even the more recent discoveries of science and the alteration which half a century has brought to the status of womanhood have not yet caused medical men sufficiently



to regard obstetrics as the great constructive side of medicine and surgery.

"Tom hates these baby cases!" the wife of a flourishing West-End practitioner once complained to a relative of mine, in confident expectation of sympathy because her husband had been called up at night to bring an infant into the world. "Few students, unhappily, take it (midwifery) as seriously as it ought to be taken," remarked the *Times*, commenting on the Maternal Mortality Conference of February 23rd. "Many doctors," asserted Miss Chamberlain at that Conference, "do not seem to appreciate what can be done by modern treatment." Another speaker confirmed her: "In my experience midwives do know their duty, but doctors often do not know what to do." "If some of them," added Lady Selborne, "took the precautions they take when performing abdominal operations, I believe the mortality among their maternity cases would be diminished."

"No greater calamity," to quote the *Times* once more, "can befall anyone than to fall into the hands of a hasty, an impatient, or a careless surgeon. Haste, impatience, and carelessness are not less disastrous in maternity work. . . . Disastrous, too, is the tendency . . . to underestimate the reactions of the human organism to pain or injury." Yet births, even of first children, take place frequently enough in the absence of the responsible practitioner, who has left the mother's bedside in the hope of sandwiching in another case or two before the final stage. "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" is a poignant phrase which many a woman has repeated in her heart to the husband and the medical man who, fearful or impatient of Nature, leave her alone to face the supreme crisis of life until the last moment or beyond it. Few men are as yet sufficiently civilized to estimate a risk that they never take and to imagine a type of pain which they never feel, and which even a woman who has endured it finds difficult afterwards to recall to memory. There are, of course, some great men of science who have spent their powers in gynecological research, and a few influential laymen who are ready to devote their energies and their funds to the same purpose. But to the general run of the profession, obstetrical work appears to be an irksome side-issue.

For these reasons the Queen's message, which suggested that maternal mortality could be reduced by the education of mothers, the wider provision of first-rate medical and midwifery services, and careful inquiry into the causes of each maternal death, might well have added as a fourth measure the training of more medical women for this special work. Just as only a woman architect can understand from what avoidable toil the housewife may be released by the simple expedient of a well-planned kitchen, so women doctors alone know what unnecessary suffering the mother can be spared in childbirth. Though the restriction of medical women to gynecological work would be an undue limitation of their powers, it is reasonably certain that women are more interested than men in preventing disease and in raising the standard of health among members of their sex.

The fact that, for a long time to come, women doctors are likely to find the majority of their patients among women or children, is the last reason in the world for withholding from them any opportunities for study and research which might increase their numbers. As the mothers of the next generation of both men and women, the health of women is of more importance to the community than that of men. It is a strange and deplorable coincidence that the already limited openings for the training of medical women should be further cut down at the very time when public attention has been directed to the urgent need for keener and more skilled obstetricians.

## THE DRAMA

### THE POETICAL DRAMA AND THE MODERN STAGE

Old Vic: "The Two Noble Kinsmen." By JOHN FLETCHER and WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

THIS production might well be added to the famous list of recurring discomforts which made the most sensitive of all actor managers (whose name appears on the play-bill at the Old Vic as part author of "The Two Noble Kinsmen") cry for restful death.

I am not capable of deciding to what extent, if to any, the hand of Shakespeare appears in this romantic tragedy. Bits of the first act seem closely his; "scythed boar," for example, is almost too violent an image for Fletcher, though he might have hit on it when trying to imitate his master. The last act again has a syntactic elaboration more Shakespearean than the rest of the play. But in the bulk it cannot be denied that the hand is that of Fletcher and of Fletcher at his best.

"The Two Noble Kinsmen" is an experiment in prettiness, and is about as pretty as anything possibly can be. Shakespeare did not care very much about prettiness, though he made a few experiments in that direction towards the end of his life, *Perdita*, for instance, and *Imogen*. He was primarily occupied with the Sublime and Beautiful, and it is this fact which prevents us assigning large portions of this play to him.

The art of Fletcher, on the other hand, with its long sentimental melodies, its trailing weak endings, dragging their slow length along, was perfectly suited to the elaboration of the pretty. There is something exquisite and languorous about the falsity of the psychology of Fletcher, who seems always to have looked at life tiredly in a glass, and the producer of a Fletcher play must concentrate on catching some echo of this artificial sadness, this imitation chivalry.

Not only was this not achieved at the Old Vic on the occasion of this revival, but what is far more serious, it was not so much as attempted. It was even, apparently, neglected on purpose. The Chaucerian décor was perhaps not a bad idea, and the fact that it was, to my eyes, extremely ugly is a personal question that should not be insisted upon. Far graver was the fact that though I was in the sixth row of the stalls and had just reread the play, I seldom caught a single word, never a whole line of the first scene. No one could have guessed it was in blank verse at all. Let us proceed to the first big scene between Palamon and Arcite, those two preposterous, but "bold young men," a sort of sixteenth-century undergraduates, whom Shakespeare has summed up in three magic lines:—

"Some to the wars to make their fortunes there,  
Some to discover islands far away,  
Some to the studious universities."

Mr. Ernest Milton can act many parts very well. But to cast him for such a rôle as that of Palamon is absurd. Mr. Eric Portman, on the other hand, who gave far the best performance of anybody, looked the right age for Arcite, behaved in the right way, and even seemed aware that he was talking verse. In the charming scene with Palamon, when the two talk over the girls who have been kind to them, he introduced a note of naïveté and bashful freshness which is the essence of the part.

Let us come on to the Jailer's Daughter. The performance of Miss Jean Forbes-Robertson has, as always, been highly commended. I am far from being unappreciative of her charm or talent. But she speaks the most lovely verse in the play, including those haunting lines with a strange foretaste of a Tennysonian melody:—

"Lo  
The moon is down; the crickets chirp; the screech owl  
Calls in the dawn,"

as if it were the baldest prose. The neglect of rhythm by which the poetical dramatists got two-thirds of their effects, reached its logical conclusion in the conception of the

Jailer's Daughter. One is forced to say that on this occasion the performance of Miss Forbes-Robertson was grotesque.

It is indeed difficult to avoid the conclusion that all this was intentional on the part of the producer and that in the one English theatre which is almost entirely given up to the English Classics, there is no one connected with the management who has not an active dislike of poetry. But indeed any Elizabethan producer to-day seems bent on proving that the particular play on which he happens to be busy is written in "sensible modern prose," though the endeavour to make his point renders the speeches unintelligible. Evidently the whole way in which young English actors are encouraged to set about their work and taught to recite and act is based on principles which must seem ruinous to anyone in love with blank verse as a dramatic medium. Hence, though the actors at Cambridge and Norwich are often less efficient than those in London, their performances are infinitely less lacerating, because they have not been elaborately taught to destroy in advance the materials with which they are working. Until the whole system of teaching diction in our dramatic academies has been reformed from top to bottom, it will remain well-nigh impossible for Londoners to learn what the Elizabethan drama is about, except in so far as they can do so by sitting quietly at home and reading.

FRANCIS BIRRELL.

## PLAYS AND PICTURES

THE special performances of "A Doll's House" by the Anmer Hall Company at the Kingsway Theatre raise some interesting points in the production of Ibsen. It is one of his plays that created most uproar at the time of writing and which might be expected to "date" most. It is not one of Ibsen's most poetical conceptions, and gains any poetical value it may possess as being a searchlight turned on a moment of history, and the feeling it spreads that a million other dolls' houses are crashing at the same moment into ruins. I had never before seen "A Doll's House" acted in modern clothes, and the experiment, though interesting, was not, I think, entirely successful. Nora herself loses quality in the process and becomes more suburban and silly than the author intended, while the contrast with Mrs. Linden goes for almost nothing. Further the volte-face at the end, always rather difficult to swallow, becomes well-nigh incredible. I am not sure the traditional method of icy exposition with which Nora ends is satisfactory. Still the extraordinary neatness and economy of the play remains. As a piece of super-Sardou it is beyond praise. Hence perhaps no English actress will ever be quite successful as Nora. We do not breed Sardou actresses, perhaps fortunately, as it has saved us the excesses of the boulevard theatre. As it was, on this occasion, Mr. Michael Sherbrooke seemed to act everybody else off the stage. He is to the Sardou manner born. The rest acted with competence, insight, and sincerity, with the result that the afternoon was an interesting one.

Until the present century it was the practice of theatre managers to include in their advertisements a list of the characters of the play to be acted. This custom still holds good in the provinces, and until I saw "The Monster," by Mr. Crane Wilbur, I did not realize what an inestimable boon it must be to playgoers. Imagine such a poster outside the Strand Theatre, promising impersonations of "Red" Mackenzie, of Caliban the negro, of Doctor Gustav Ziska, and of the Man without a Face. What unsuspecting highbrow could be so guileless as to expect anything but a horror play, even if he had given the title the benefit of the doubt? If he were so misguided as to enter, he might or might not be horrified, according as he would or would not be horrified by the cruder side-shows at a fair or the "House of Mystery" at Wembley. Mr. Edmund Gwenn might conceivably make him laugh once

or twice, and Mr. George Relph would certainly infuriate him by his persistent and apparently needless refusal to remove either Miss Jane Welsh or himself from the danger zone of Mr. C. V. France's sadistic cruelty. But then all playgoers are not highbrows, even if they are guileless, and the very unsophisticated will probably be entertained by this artless though mechanically ingenious affair, though they must not expect a "Man with Red Hair" or even a "Dracula."

"The Cocoanuts" at the Garrick is a cross between revue and musical comedy, and a very successful blending of the breeds. It has all the speed and vitality of the former, and none of the cloying sentimentality usually to be found in the latter. There are plenty of jokes, some of them good, most of them old, but all gabbled through at such a rate that one hardly has time to notice them before the chorus comes skipping on again, with Pat and Terry Kendall or Fred Duprez or Max Nesbitt or beautiful Madeline Seymour, or half a dozen other clever people. There is just enough plot to fill in the gaps between songs and dances, and just not enough songs and dances to be tedious. Altogether an excellent entertainment for anyone who wishes to be amused without being asked to think. Mr. Fred Duprez has a roving eye which seems always to be looking for the next thing on which to make asinine comment. His part may have been committed to paper, but he races through it as if any words would do, and the resultant air of spontaneity is highly diverting. I should have thought the unattractive label of "snappy absurdity" hardly a wise move on the part of the entrepreneur, Mr. Philip Ridgeway, but it was Mr. Ridgeway who succeeded in popularizing Tchekov at Barnes and in the West End, so no doubt he knows what he is doing.

According to the programme of Playroom Six "The Language of the Birds," by Adolf Paul, is "a great play which should be produced in London." This is given as the opinion of "managers, actors, and critics." Managers and actors are notoriously bad judges of plays; can it be that critics are no better? "The Language of the Birds" may have merits lurking behind the high-falutin' pretentiousness of the translation (which contains such lines as "To such an one it would not be right, and rightly not"), but an acquaintance with it made solely through this production leaves me with the belief that it is dull and devoid of dramatic interest. The first act is almost entirely taken up with two interminable duologues, the substance of which could easily have been expressed without loss to the theme in a few minutes; and the rest of the play is similarly spun out. The acting is adequate, and will be better when some of the company are more certain of their words. On the first night their groping was rather painful. The one notable feature of the production is the settings of Mr. Horatio Taylor, which are not only very pleasing to the eye, but are so cunningly contrived as to convey a sense of Oriental vastness which one would not have thought possible on so small a stage. His costumes are not so successful, but he is evidently an artist to be watched.

"Moulin Rouge" (at the Tivoli) is at the same time a very good and a very disappointing film. Mr. E. A. Dupont, who made it for British International Pictures, Ltd., is the German producer of that remarkable film "Vaudeville." He has the true sense of the camera, so to speak: he can compose a picture or photograph an ordinary subject from an odd angle so that it becomes a thing of real and surprising beauty. He has used this skill in the photography of "Moulin Rouge," and as long as the film remains a succession of entertaining pictures it is extraordinarily good. It is when it tries to tell a story that it becomes weak: the psychology fails completely to "get over." The plot is slightly less commonplace than often. A young man and his fiancée visit Paris, where he proceeds to fall passionately in love with his future mother-in-law, the star of the Moulin Rouge, and she with him. The situation becoming impossible, he decides to commit suicide by tampering with the mechanism of his car, but it is his



fiancée who drives off in the car, and his frantic effort to save her life leads to a terrible accident in which she is nearly killed. The disaster brings him to his senses, and all ends happily. Mlle. Olga Tschecchowa acts extremely well as "Parysia," the star, but it is chiefly for the pictures of music-hall interiors, taken in the Casino de Paris, that the film is worth seeing.

Anyone who is interested in Old Master drawings should pay a visit to the collection now on exhibition at the Savile Gallery, Stratford Place. It contains a number of drawings by Claude, Watteau (some charming figure studies), Ingres, Boucher, Fragonard, Burgkmair, &c. A "Flora" by Tiepolo has an admirable grace of line. There are also several pleasant drawings by Guercino, one of which, "Training a Horse," has an almost Chinese feeling, and is a masterpiece of restrained strength of design and lively movement. "A Kitchen Scene" is an amusing product of the Dutch school. At the St. George's Gallery Mrs. Gwendolen Raverat has an exhibition of Wood Engravings, Lithographs, Drawings, and a few Paintings. Mrs. Raverat is at her best in her lithographs and woodcuts, in both of which she is an excellent and traditional craftsman. Many of them show not only this sureness of technique and soundness of construction, but (as, for instance, "The Sleepers") sensitive and charming drawing. The exhibition of paintings by André Derain at the Lefèvre Galleries was not noticed in these columns when it first opened, through an oversight. It affords an opportunity of seeing a representative collection of the work of one of the most important of modern French painters.

Things to see and hear in the coming week:—

Saturday, March 31st.—

Summer Austin and Harold Craxton, Song and Piano Recital, Victoria and Albert Museum, 3.  
Jose Iturbi, Pianoforte Recital, Æolian Hall, 3.  
O.U.D.S. in "Five Years," by John Fernald and R. P. Brown, "Vigil," by Emlyn Williams, and "King's Evidence," by Peter Fleming, at the Playhouse, Oxford.

Sunday, April 1st.—

Dr. Bernard Hollander on "The Psychology of the Female Mind," South Place, 11.  
"The Making of an Immortal," at the Arts Theatre Club.  
"Apron Strings," by Mr. Charles Whittaker, at the Strand (Venturers' Society).  
Stage Society in "The Dictator."  
Film Society's Film—"Tartuffe," New Gallery Kinema, 2.30.

Monday, April 2nd.—

"Harold," by Lord Tennyson, at the Court.  
"Happy Families," by "Walton Trevor," at the "Q."  
"Everyman," at the Old Vic.  
"Gentlemen Prefer Blondes," by Anita Loos, at the Prince of Wales Theatre.

Wednesday, April 4th.—

"The Stranger in the House," by Michael Morton and Peter Traill, at Wyndhams.  
"Other People's Wives," by Walter Hackett, at St. Martins.

Friday, April 6th.—

Handel's "Messiah," at the Albert Hall, 2.30 (Royal Choral Society).  
"Parsifal," at the Queen's Hall, 8.

OMICRON.

## A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

THE ATHENÆUM, APRIL 1st, 1828.

### PERIODICAL PRETENSIONS

THE LITERARY GAZETTE and THE LONDON WEEKLY REVIEW  
To those who find food for laughter in the follies of mankind, one of the most amusing exhibitions of the day has been the declaration of war against the EDINBURGH REVIEW by the

LITERARY GAZETTE, and the manifesto against all rivals and contemporaries by the LONDON WEEKLY REVIEW. The threats of Russia against her eastern enemies are mild, when compared with the denunciations of the Autocrat of Paternoster Row against the Intruder of the North; and Mr. Jerdan evidently conceives the outpouring of the vials of his wrath on the devoted head of Mr. Jeffrey, to be of more awful portent to the world than the marching of the Emperor Nicholas across the Pruth, to attack the Sultan Mahmoud in his capital—or, than the assembling of armies, for the coming contest, in every part of the European world: while the annals of the whole East,—from the court of him who calls himself the Brother of the Sun and Moon, and the Shadow of God upon earth, to the golden-footed Majesty of Ava who regards all other Sovereigns as his vassals and slaves,—present nothing more remarkable for the quality of complacent self-adulation than the manifesto of the LONDON WEEKLY REVIEW.

The most amusing feature of this double exhibition of human frailty and folly is, however, the protestations which each of the self-lauding Journals named have, for months past, rung in the ears of all men to whom their voices could extend. They should never condescend to puffing,—not they, indeed! they stood on the lofty pinnacle of perfect independence, and needed no such aids. Their employment of them, therefore, cannot be even palliated by the plea of necessity; it must be sheer love, not merely of hearing, but of singing their own praises; and freely enough, indeed, have they administered to themselves whatever gratification this employment may afford them.

## THE HOUNDS ARE GONE

UNDER the white November sun  
This morning the woods lie quiet. One  
By one the cautious creatures come  
Out of their warm nocturnal home.  
They sniff the chilly blowing air,  
Expectant still of trouble there  
Awaiting them—then pick their way  
Through the churned mud of yesterday.  
Even the leaves that palely gleam  
On the wands beside the wood-ride seem  
As if they question the watching sky  
What terror to-day comes galloping by.

For how shall peace be trusted more,  
That holds such memories in store?

When all the woods were still and grey  
In the nearing dusk of yesterday,  
And only the rustle of seldom bird  
Or pad of homing feet was heard,—  
Suddenly then hot tempest tore  
The dreaming quiet asunder, nor  
Hardly was there time to hide  
From the horror that leapt on every side.  
Through snapping boughs the thunder came  
Of hoof and skirling horn; and flame  
From every steaming hound-tongue seemed  
To scorch the scurrying leaves that gleamed  
In the undergrowth. Oh, then how fast  
The blood pulsed in small veins, as past  
The fury flew!—and fear of death  
In tiny throats near stopt the breath.

But under the white November sky  
Quite again the woodlands lie:  
Of all that yelping horde there is  
None left to drown the cadences  
Of boughs that sway and leaves that fall  
And birds that shyly chatter and call—

Only in little yearling hearts  
With every sound an added fear now starts.

C. HENRY WARREN.

OPERAS.

**LYRIC THEATRE,** Hammersmith. **Riverside 3012.**  
EVENINGS, at 8.15. MATINEES, WED. & SAT., at 2.30.  
(LAST 3 WEEKS.) "THE BEGGAR'S OPERA." (LAST 3 WEEKS.)  
Thursday, April 19th. "LOVE IN A VILLAGE."

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## THE WORLD OF BOOKS

SIR THOMAS BROWNE

THE first volume of Mr. Geoffrey Keynes's "The Works of Sir Thomas Browne" (Faber & Gwyer, four guineas the set of six volumes) has just been published. It contains "Religio Medici," "Christian Morals," and "A Letter to a Friend." The editing is what one would expect from Mr. Keynes, who is the one man to produce an editorially perfect edition of Sir Thomas Browne. His view of the functions of an editor are, however, ascetic, and he obviously holds that the less the editor obtrudes himself upon the notice of the reader, the better it is for both. His introduction runs to six pages, which include his "General Preface" as well as the particular prefaces to the three works contained in this volume, and he remarks that "Sir Thomas Browne, unadorned by the comments of anyone besides himself is an unusual, though it is to be hoped, not an unwelcome, spectacle." There is, no doubt, a good deal to be said for this view, and the editor who thrusts himself obtrusively between the author and the reader is an abomination. But there are writers, of whom, I think, the author of "Religio Medici" is one, who require and invite a certain amount of comment. Also it is impossible, with this volume before one, not to say a word about the relation between the price of what is called a "definitive" edition and its contents. The volume is crown 8vo, and contains 189 pages; its price is 14s. The purchaser of this slim book may look at things from a different point of view from the editor, who remarks that the existence of his "Bibliography of Browne" has "enabled me to reduce bibliographical information to a minimum."

It is nearly a hundred years since a complete edition of Sir Thomas Browne was published. The publishers of Mr. Keynes's edition promise us a considerable amount of new material, but we shall have to wait for the fifth and sixth volumes, containing the miscellaneous writings and the letters, before we know its value and interest. Meanwhile, the century which has elapsed between the two editions invites reflection upon Browne's position in the ebb and flow of literary reputations, as does, too, the recent appearance of one of his works, "Sir Thomas Browne's Christian Morals, the Second Edition with the Life of the Author by Samuel Johnson," edited with an introduction and notes by S. C. Roberts (Cambridge University Press, 6s.). One has but to read Johnson's criticism to see how the attitude towards Browne has changed in the last 170 years. To Professor Saintsbury, Browne is among the greatest writers of English prose; Sir Edmund Gosse finds in him "so much of high, positive beauty that we do not class him in the procession of the writers of his time, but award him a place apart, as an author of solitary and intrinsic charm"; Mr. Strachey bears witness "to the splendid echo of Browne's syllables," and autobiographically confesses that he "has known, he believes, few happier moments than those in which he has rolled the periods of 'Hydriotaphia' out to the darkness and the nightingales through the studious cloisters of Trinity."

The difference between Dr. Johnson and Mr. Strachey is, of course, the difference between the eighteenth and the twentieth century. Dr. Johnson was primarily interested in Browne for the kind of man he was and the kind of

things he had to say. Was he an infidel or an atheist or a good Christian? Was he a contemner of religion or "among the most zealous Professors of Christianity"? Was he charitable, vain, truthful? Were his morals sound and his science and learning profound? Such were the qualities and the questions which the literary critic of the eighteenth century was concerned with, and Johnson finds Browne's claim to greatness in "his exuberance of knowledge, and plenitude of ideas," and he prophesies that Browne "will not easily be deprived" of the esteem of posterity, "while learning shall have any reverence among men." It never occurs to Johnson that Browne was an artist or a poet, and he considers that his chief importance as a stylist is that "he must be confessed to have augmented our philosophical diction."

The modern view is almost exactly opposite to Johnson's. It is not the things which Browne has to say, but the way in which he says them that interests Professor Saintsbury, Sir Edmund Gosse, Mr. Strachey, and the nightingales. His morality, his religion, his theology, have become, like his learning and science, faded, quaint, and dusty antiquities; what lives and glows is his style, the high and positive beauty of his prose. To-day Browne is either a great artist or nothing, and to many critics he is among the greatest of English artists who wrote in prose. But I do not think it is quite correct to say, as Mr. Keynes says, that Browne's reputation has steadily increased since 1836. As soon as people began to free their critical faculties from the extraordinary moral and intellectual cobwebs that obstructed even the sound sense of a Johnson, the superb art of Sir Thomas Browne was visible and recognized by them. He was rediscovered, as Sir Edmund Gosse says, by Coleridge and Lamb. But the best critic of Browne is De Quincey, and no modern has given higher or more discriminating praise to Browne's prose than De Quincey gave in "Rhetoric," which, I imagine, must have been written before 1830. It is true that De Quincey misquotes and ruins what he calls the opening bar of probably the finest passage in Browne—"Now since these dead bones have already outlasted the living ones of Methuselah"—but his comparison of the style of "Hydriotaphia" to that of a fugue is illuminating, and that he really felt its beauties is shown by their effect upon his own style. Since De Quincey's day, no sensitive and intelligent critic, so far as I know, has been deaf to the elaborate and fugal periods which Mr. Strachey rolled out as a challenge even to the nightingales, but there appears to have been a moment when the obsession for morality and moralizing descended once more, in a new form, upon the cultured and respectable Englishman and threatened to make him deaf to the song that Sir Thomas or any other Siren sang. Sir Leslie Stephen wrote about Browne when Victorianism lay heavy upon the land; he himself wrote with understanding and appreciation, but he notes that Browne's reputation is declining:—

"These charming writings have ceased to suit our modern taste; and Sir Thomas is already passing under that shadow which obscures all, even the greatest, reputations, and with which no one has dwelt more pathetically or graphically than himself."

LEONARD WOOLF.

## REVIEWS

## L. E. L. REDIVIVA

L. E. L.: *A Mystery of the Thirties*. By D. E. ENFIELD. (The Hogarth Press. 10s. 6d.)

OLD men who have not yet lost their memory or the habit of reading, and are therefore compelled however occasionally to pick up a book fresh from the printer, must expect to experience shocks of a mild, and not disagreeable, surprise. But which of us in these days of hypercriticism and harsh judgments upon the poetasters of the last century could have expected to find issued from the Hogarth Press daintily attired (all insects as Dr. Johnson once pleasantly reminded Mrs. Thrale should fly bright colours) a sweet-tempered volume admirably composed, and devoted to the memory, of whom do you think? of L. E. L.!

"What beck'ning Ghost, along the moonlight shade  
Invites my steps, and points to yonder glade,  
'Tis she?"

Indeed it is! 'tis that young and most unfortunate lady, Letitia Landon.

The tragic fate that in October, 1838, befell the wife of Governor Maclean in Cape Coast Castle, Africa, flings such a canopy of gloom over the name of the young creature who once flitted with such gay foolishness along the Old Brompton Road as to secure for her "beck'ning ghost" the most compassionate treatment.

It is very easy, and only human to think kindly of L. E. L., only it must be on the terms that you do not read a line of either her poetry or her prose.

And yet it was not always thus.

"But in her inmost abstract and visioned moods (and these prevailed) she was the Poet, seen and glorified in her immortal writings.

"And immortal they will be, despite the critical censures which may justly be bestowed upon immature blots and careless errors; so long as love and passion animate the breast of youth, so long as tenderness and pathos affect the mind of man, so long as glowing imagery and natural truth have power over the intellect and heart, so long will the poetry of L. E. L. exert a voice to delight, touch, refine, and exalt the universal soul."

One opinion is often said to be as good as another.

We must not rob Mrs. Enfield's readers of the pleasure and pleasurable pain that await them in the perusal of her feeling sketch of L. E. L. from her trifling beginnings to her melancholy end.

Her literary misfortunes began with her birth and her environment. *First*, her period—the Age of Byron and Scott; *second*, her juxtaposition in Old Brompton to the cottage then inhabited by William Jerdan, the Editor (amongst many other papers) of the powerful LITERARY GAZETTE. Byron taught Letitia to believe (though at heart the most cheerful of damsels) that to move mankind she must pretend to be a blighted being, and Scott taught her to believe that nothing was easier than to write poetry. Thousands of young females during this period of "Album Verses," learnt the same lessons, but happily for most of them, they had no William Jerdan just across their fathers' garden-wall with a magazine at hand to accomplish their destruction.

On March 11th, 1820, in the 164th number of the LITERARY GAZETTE, appeared L. E. L.'s first printed copy of verses entitled "Rome." Would that we could add "the rest was silence"! From that hour poetry flowed from her pen, and so long as it continued to "flow" it appeared in the LITERARY GAZETTE and elsewhere.

Nor can it be said that Mr. Jerdan in giving L. E. L. a fair rate of wages for her bad verses was acting unfairly by his proprietors, for the poetry of L. E. L. was one of the most popular "features" in that critical organ. The notion that L. E. L. wrote "poetry" lingered on for many years, and in Richard Garnett's article upon her in the D. N. B. traces, not unpleasant traces, of this sheer delusion may be found clinging to some of the sentences of that keen but kind-hearted critic.

If any reader of Mrs. Enfield's sketch wishes to study the subject of the rise and fall of L. E. L.'s literary reputation, let him read Jerdan's Autobiography (1852). A book referred to by Mrs. Enfield as "painful," but one which we have often found not only amusing but most instructive. Had

the late Sir Robertson Nicoll, the Editor of the BRITISH WEEKLY, left his Autobiography behind him, it might have made a companion volume to Jerdan's, and revealed to us alike the unpleasant resemblances and the amazing differences between the literary periods of 1820 and 1870.

Had Miss Landon stuck to "poetry," she would have put a few thousand pounds of much-needed and well-spent money into her purse, and have done much less harm in the world than is done in a month by a dishonest or careless plumber, but encouraged by her friendly editor she took up the pen of a reviewer, and stuck her teeth into her contemporary writers. She at once became the victim of cruel slander. That clever rascal Dr. Maginn was said to have seduced her, and her own habit of talking confidentially to entire strangers, who at once proceeded to abuse her confidence, carried the slanderous stories far and wide.

That respectable man Mr. John Forster who lived on to become the biographer of Goldsmith, Landor, and Dickens, and the friend of Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle, and the "harbinger" of the London cabman, after becoming engaged to Miss Landon felt it necessary to break the engagement off, owing to the unsatisfactory result of the investigations he considered it his duty to make into the truth of these tales.

Mrs. Enfield is convinced that there is no truth in these stories, and carries her confidence so far as to state her conviction that L. E. L., previous to her ill-fated marriage, was as fiercely virginal as were the Miss Lances of Hans Place in whose house L. E. L. lodged for ten years. We are glad to believe it both of the Miss Lances and of Miss Landon.

It is however the horror of L. E. L.'s death in the lonely South African Castle, a death self-inflicted as we cannot doubt, though grimmer tales were told, that keeps the memory of the poor lady alive, and makes her ghost beckon us to her grave. How she ever came to marry her grim husband, and how he ever came to choose this Brompton butterfly as a successor to the negress who had already borne him a dusky brood in Cape Coast Castle, who can say? Her London friends gave her a good "send off." Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, a great patron of the LITERARY GAZETTE, gave her away at the altar, and made what was considered a "funny" speech at the breakfast. Mr. and Mrs. Maclean sailed away to Cape Coast Castle. In four months she was dead. Mrs. Enfield tells this melancholy tale with both spirit and feeling.

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL.

## A GERMAN ESTIMATE OF DOSTOEVSKY

Dostoevsky: *The Man and his Work*. By JULIUS MEIER-GRAEFE. Translated by HERBERT H. MARKS. (Routledge. 25s.)

THIS is an interesting, but a very unsatisfactory book. Herr Meier-Graefe is incurably lyrical. He rhapsodizes where he should elucidate. He insists on giving long summaries of each of Dostoevsky's works, presenting them over again with enthusiasm, instead of trying to seize the principles of their author's imagination. He follows out the plots of "The Idiot" and "The Brothers Karamazov" in such detail that their contours are lost. Sixty pages are devoted to a résumé of the first, ninety to a précis of the second. It was obviously unnecessary to retell the stories of Myshkin and Dmitri Karamazov at all; it was an unaccountable error of taste for Herr Meier-Graefe to retell them in terms of his own imagination. He presents them, it is true, with reverential sympathy, but he gives us something which is not Dostoevsky. His object is to prove that there is a continuous development in Dostoevsky's art; that "The Idiot" begins where "Crime and Punishment" leaves off, and that "The Brothers Karamazov," finished a little before its author's death, is the crown and completion of his work. This may be so, but this is just what the author fails to make clear. He might have done so if he had been less exhaustive, if he had assumed the existence of most of his material, and had selected only what was most relevant.

Moreover, he arrogates special privileges for his hero. He has "no hesitation" in placing "The Brothers Karamazov" "far higher than all other works put together." He foolishly depreciates Tolstoy. He gravely claims that "Dostoevsky introduced the child into literature," a claim strange



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enough in itself, but one which moreover ignores Blake, Wordsworth, and the marvellous figure of Mignon in "Wilhelm Meister." The fact that Dostoevsky "attained the pinnacle of his creation at the end of his life is unique in world-literature"; yet we know that several writers have done so. What is usual is claimed as exceptional. Dostoevsky's greatness as a writer is found to be something more than greatness. He is neither to be compared with Dante, Shakespeare, and Goethe, nor with the prophetic writers of other ages. This special pleading, however, is not peculiar to Herr Meier-Graefe; nearly all eulogists of Dostoevsky indulge in it. He is either condemned by rote in the fashionable French style, or praised at the expense of literature. He was a very great writer, and it is better that he should be praised in any way at all than condemned by rote; but one would like to see him praised in a different way for a change.

Herr Meier-Graefe is a brilliant critic of painting, and it is when he is drawing comparisons between Dostoevsky and Rembrandt or Delacroix that he is at his best in this volume. These analogies may at first seem far-fetched; one may consider them misleading or inadmissible in literary criticism; but the fact is that when Herr Meier-Graefe sees Dostoevsky in terms of Rembrandt he sees him more clearly; he is immediately more at ease with him. It is a pity, indeed, that he did not work out his comparisons a little more exactly; it might have given us an indirect kind of literary criticism of unique interest. His judgments, arrived at through painting, however, have disabilities as well as advantages. He quotes a critic who very suggestively "likens Alyosha to a figure in Fra Angelico." He feels rightly that this analogy is a little too pretty, and suggests that "if it is permissible to describe (Alyosha) in the world of pictures one would prefer to add to Fra Angelico's sweetness the freer space which a Piero della Francesca animated with grander figures." The original comparison was a fancy, and a very pretty one, and Herr Meier-Graefe's emendation makes it better. But that is not enough; and he goes off into a fascinating description of the spiritual Tuscany which, he holds, still lay hidden in Russia in Dostoevsky's time. Now though this passage is illuminating, explaining a number of things about Alyosha and making him more credible to Western eyes, it considerably falsifies him at the same time. The author becomes so satisfied with Alyosha as a pictorial figure that he overlooks all his faults as a character. What serves to elucidate Alyosha to us, serves to justify him completely to Herr Meier-Graefe.

This pictorial approach leads him into an over-estimation of two other characters of very questionable merit, Myshkin and Sonia. They are "pictorial"; accordingly they give him a peculiar satisfaction, a satisfaction as great as Raskolnikov or Svidrigailov give, but different, more "poetic." He tends for the same reason to depreciate Ivan Karamazov a little, and to be uncritical about Father Zossima. His pictorial evaluation of character, however, is always interesting, and, if the reader corrects the bias, has real value.

An interesting fact which Herr Meier-Graefe brings out strongly (it is a commonplace, apparently, of German criticism) is Schiller's immense influence on Dostoevsky. In the funeral oration on Pushkin, Dostoevsky ranked Schiller with Cervantes and Shakespeare. He was influenced by Schiller from the start; he imitated him, reacted against him, and never ceased to admire him; and Dmitri Karamazov, his most mature creation, is, as Herr Meier-Graefe points out, "the born Schiller type." This is how Schiller describes Karl Moor the hero of "The Robbers": "a spirit whom the most depraved vice attracts only for the sake of the greatness which depends on it; for the sake of the power which it claims; for the sake of the dangers which accompany it. A remarkable and important being, equipped with every faculty necessary for being either a Brutus or a Catiline, according to the trend of the faculty." In this figure one may find remote but real resemblances to Dmitri Karamazov; he might well have been conceived from it. The "noble" Schiller is very unlike Dostoevsky; yet it is obvious that his influence on Dostoevsky was profound and life-long, and a study of it, on the lines of Mr. Middleton Murry's "Keats and Shakespeare," might be very illuminating.

Of Dostoevsky the man, Herr Meier-Graefe says very little. He concludes, however, that the stories which make out Dostoevsky a pervert and a confirmed gambler are without the least real foundation, and from a writer who has studied his subject so exhaustively this should have decisive weight.

The translator's task has obviously been an unusually difficult one; but nothing can excuse the uncouthness of the rendering. To translate Schiller's well-known line as "Be embraced, millions," is surely the very absurdity of literalness, and there are many other passages which seem to be treated in the same spirit.

EDWIN MUIR.

### A SOLDIER OF CORTES

**The True History of the Conquest of Mexico.** By BERNAL DIAZ DEL CASTILLO. Translated in 1800 by MAURICE KEATINGE. Two vols. (Harrap. 30s.)

**The Discovery and Conquest of Mexico.** By BERNAL DIAZ DEL CASTILLO. Translated by A. P. MAUDSLAY. (Routledge. 15s.)

WHEN Cortes set out on his Mexican campaign there went with him a young Spaniard gifted with a singularly retentive memory added to a capacity for detailed observation. Bernal Diaz del Castillo accompanied the conqueror on all his adventures, was "present in one hundred and nineteen battles and engagements," and wrote in his old age "The True History of the Conquest of New Spain." This history, four centuries after the conquest, is still undergoing adventures, of which the two versions under review are examples. Keatinge's translation was taken from the first Spanish edition published in 1632 by Friar Alonzo Remon, who is said to have tampered with the text, suppressing or interpolating pages and garbling the facts. In 1901 Don Genaro Garcia made the first exact copy of the original manuscript kept in Guatemala, and Professor Maudslay has translated from this edition. Yet the curious reader, desiring to compare the true and the false, cannot do so adequately from these books; for Professor Maudslay, in editing his volume for the Broadway Travellers series, has considerably abridged his own translation, till it contains more suppressions than the "corrupt" text, although comparison of parallel passages reveals a more detailed style of narrative than in Keatinge.

The "True History," as such, seems then to be doomed to misfortune. But this need not trouble the general reader. Since the chronicle of Bernal Diaz is leisurely and long, Professor Maudslay's compression is all to the good, and his scholarly notes provide additional historical and geographical information. On the other hand, Keatinge's translation, as edited in a more popular manner in New York by Mr. A. D. Howden Smith, must be referred to for Diaz's account of further Spanish exploits and attempts at colonization after the fall of Mexico City.

Bernal Diaz is a vivid and most readable chronicler, ready with intimate descriptions, whether of the Mexicans' barbarous religious rites, the habits and ceremonials of their great but weak-willed chief, Montezuma, or the wiles of Cortes in dealing both with Indians and rival Spaniards. It is only natural that pride should underlie his record of disasters and endurance. When the history was written Mexico was a firmly established Spanish dominion, and Diaz one of the few surviving eye-witnesses of the original city with its towers and buildings "like the enchantments they tell of in the legends of Amadis." For "of all these wonders that I then beheld, to-day all is overthrown and lost, nothing left standing." Diaz, by writing his long history, raised a new edifice. He was not worried if it commemorated destruction, accompanied by acts as ruthlessly barbaric as the Indians' own customs. There was, and is, adventure and intrepidity in plenty to counter that. There is the excitement of penetration into unknown territory, of dealings with unknown tribes. There is also an implicit estimate of the conqueror's character as seen by a follower. For Cortes as a soldier Diaz has only admiration; he is amused, one suspects, at his leader's craft and diplomacy; but the unfortunate tendency to monopolize both honour and riches aroused just resentment in a fellow adventurer for whom fame and fortune were the main attractions of the expedition.



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## POETRY

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**Cheiron.** By R. C. TREVELYAN. (The Hogarth Press. 4s. 6d.)

POETIC discontent with ordinary life may often take the temporary form of satire. The true satirist, after all, is the most contented of men, for he is in possession of an exact, swift, and pointed art. Mr. William Plomer, despite his vigorous wit, is not so much a satirist as an idealist looking for a nice spot to pitch his poetic tent and being interrupted all the time. Much of the self-centred life of South Africa has irked him. He can find as yet no godly reason for tourists at Victoria Falls or for the reminiscences of colonels on the outward liner. We benefit by his present exasperation, for at his best he hits the nearest mark. Besides, the exercise has done Mr. Plomer good, since he says in the last stanza of his book:—

"For now I rise and step into the ring  
With happy muscles and the gloves upon my wrists,  
Punched by the past, a prince of pugilists,  
Ready for ten rounds with any thought or thing."

He is best when his fancy turns on its own pivot. Paley compared the universe to a watch. The poem called "The Watchmaker" is good modern work: Mr. Plomer puts together a queer little cosmos of clocks and the very words are clogged and sprung.

Dissatisfaction of a deeper kind is to be found in "Country Comets," by Mr. Cecil Day Lewis. These poems deal in cycle with unhappy love and their painful sincerity makes a critic feel awkward. Personal emotion, as contrasted with the emotion of art, is apt to bring up turgid images and many of these poems suffer from a confusion of colour. But, like the work of Mr. Richard Hughes, they have at their best a curious intensity, that is part vision:—

"I felt your thought reach out sure fingers  
For mine, that had groped so long, so empty,  
Finding no flame but a touch turned it to cinders.  
Your hands on mine, we worked the key  
(How rustily it stammered!) of this dark mind."

Here is mental passion too keen to become merely metaphysical:—

"Love's eye is grown too clear, too clear:  
He sees in a play of mouth or wrist  
Enough to split a hemisphere;  
And then, turning anatomist,  
Pins happiness upon the table  
With scalpels to lay bare its law:—  
He'd better try to stick a label  
On the flash of a meteor."

Mr. Chard Powers Smith moves in a bland and profuse world of poetic recollections. His lyric cadences are never surprising: in fact *tum* is followed faithfully by *tee*. He is better when he has keyed down his work to an easy conversational pitch as in his anecdotal ballads. He must be American, for he writes, "Tut's ten thousand year old beauty tomb," and we scarcely like his "Roman Marching Song":—

"Like dawn across the universe my banner is unfurled.  
My eagles scream like meteors across the heavens hurled.  
And like the marching gods my legions tramp across the world.  
Rome—Rome—Rome."

Still it is notorious that the best regiments have always stepped to the worst airs.

Profuseness is the symphony also of Miss Adamson's poems of Scottish heather, hills, and trees. Highlands and Lowlands sweep by in her panoramic stanzas, and she tells you what you can see from this hill or that rock:—

"From Firth of Forth to Cheviot hills  
You see the space from Lammer Law,  
The cloud that on the Grampian spills,  
The cliffs that darken by the shore."

She has a gift of simple, picturesque statement that ought not to displease anyone, and her fluency is remarkable.

It is pleasant after that to hold hands, bend down, and run into the little world of childhood which Miss Madox

Roberts has made. The innocence of these songs is so splendid that Mr. A. A. Milne will have to put more butter on the King's bread *and* at once. A child looks at a rabbit:—

"He sat down close where I could see,  
And his big still eyes looked hard at me,  
His big eyes bursting out of the rim,  
And I looked back very hard at him."

Naïveté could scarcely go further: beyond that there is nothing but the great Inane. Only one poem fails, "A Child Asleep," and that is because it shows the influence of Mr. Walter de la Mare. No doubt an American book, since the word "bug" is used in a general sense.

Poetic horsemanship, so to speak, has become rare since the Georgian poets got into the weary habit of pedestrianism. Mr. T. Sturge Moore gave us, with a smouldering of constant genius, a Greek world of his own. Mr. Trevelyan has been forming a world for himself in classic myth: and to read his new play several times is to realize how fine in poise and choice is his conscientious craftsmanship. The boy pupils of Cheiron, the aged Centaur, re-enact before their beloved master, the divine theft of Prometheus. "How beautiful is fire" one thinks with Shelley, when the reeded spark divides itself and the lines move with a grave metrical joy and a disciplined loveliness. One might argue that the second act, which deals with Cheiron's choice of death instead of immortality, is another play, but that is to take the part of the wiseacres and the stone-throwers.

AUSTIN CLARKE.

## THE NONESUCH DANTE

**La Divina Commedia, or the Divine Vision of Dante Alighieri.** in Italian and English. The Italian text edited by MARIO CASELLA, of the University of Florence, with the English version of H. F. CAREY. 42 Illustrations after the Drawings by SANDRO BOTTICELLI. (The Nonesuch Press. £5 15s. 6d.)

IN this Dante the Nonesuch Press has undoubtedly produced a very beautiful and noble book. The arrangement of text and translation in parallel columns and the italic type are cleverly designed to give it something of the appearance of a manuscript and thus bring it into line with Botticelli's drawings. The whole effect is highly pleasing. But if the drawings form admirable illustrations to this book, they cannot be said to illustrate Dante. Botticelli might have illustrated the "Vita Nuova," not the Divine Comedy. The art of his day was far behind that in depth of feeling, experience, and suffering. Dante started with Virgil for his guide and Thomas Aquinas at his fingers' ends. These designs have all the charm and delicacy one would expect, especially in the "Purgatorio" and the "Paradiso," and at times a primitive quaintness all their own, but they are far removed from the stern reality of this world of Dante's maturity, which abides as an allegory of human life for all time. Moreover, they lack variety even in the "Inferno," and when he reaches the "Paradiso" Botticelli throws up the sponge and virtually ceases to try to illustrate his poem. Perhaps this is the wisest course, considering the difficulties of the task. A good illustrator of a great poet is almost as rare as a good translator. Who could really illustrate Shakespeare? But there is one man who could illustrate Dante and who was saturated with his work, as his poems show, that is Michelangelo: and he has probably come nearer to doing so in the Sistine than anyone else. Yet even he cannot give the joyousness of parts of the "Purgatorio" and of the "Paradiso." We should have to call in Blake for that. Of other illustrators with whom we are acquainted there is a good deal to be said for Federigo Zuccaro, especially in the "Paradiso." The decorative character of the method he adopts there and even the exaggerations of the early Baroque quality of his style help to mark off the "Paradiso" as something apart from the rest of the poem and yet to keep it in touch with the real world. Not that he fails in the earlier portions. Doré seems to me almost too realistic, though I can claim no specialist's knowledge of art, but he is obviously at his best in the "Inferno."

In a book of this kind the translation was bound to be in verse, we imagine, for typographical reasons. This being so, Carey's is certainly the classical English version, and it



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is not more out of date than the best of those of our own day, such as that by Mr. M. B. Anderson, which comes from over the Atlantic and is especially good in the last two *cantiche*, will in due course become. In any case, with the Italian beside it, the translation plays but a secondary part here. It does not bear an undue portion of the weight of Dante upon its slender shoulders, serving rather as a finger-post to guide the reader over to the Italian. Longfellow gave us the best line for line verse crib, but he cannot hold his own against Carey for general purposes. For myself, I shall always favour a prose translation for great epics, like the "Divina Commedia," the Iliad or the Odyssey, or for great tragic poets, like Shakespeare or Æschylus. Here the subject-matter has sufficient weight to hold the reader for its own sake, while it is so impregnated with the creator's personality, so complete a poetic whole, that its quality can never altogether evaporate in the hands of a translator who is not a hopeless bungler. Dante must have had prescience of his fate when he wrote in the "Convivio" that "nothing harmonized by a musical bond can be transmitted from its own speech without losing all its sweetness and harmony." In attempting a verse rendering a translator, however unconsciously, is setting up as a rival to his poet, challenging him on his own chosen ground, and the greater the poet, the more certainly does the fate of Icarus await him. He can hardly hope to satisfy a critical reader and may disgust him not only with his own version, but even with the original, though one hopes he may lead him to it. It must always astonish those who have dipped into it to remember that the leading Italians of the Romantic movement, including Manzoni, derived their enthusiasm and admiration for Shakespeare from Le Tourneur's very mediocre translation in French prose.

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The beginnings of the movement were on a small scale. To Leo X. it appeared no more than one of those *querelles de sacristie* which were common enough at the time, a time in which Catholicism was less stereotyped and more living than it is to-day. It was then the Church; it is now one of the Churches: there is all the difference in the world between the two things. In the sixteenth century it was part of the established order of things. No one dreamed that a revolution was either imminent or even possible; or that the fountains of the deep could be unsealed. What had seemed, however, to be no more than a scholastic dispute, developed into an attack on the teaching and institutions of the Mediæval Church, in opposition to which Luther progressively asserted himself:—

"In the struggle to do so against the forces of tradition incorporated in the Papacy and the Mediæval Church, he was gradually led to question and ultimately to reject the papal absolutism: to substitute for the papal-hierarchic Church the more spiritual and democratic conception of the New Testament; to vindicate the sovereignty and independence of the secular State against the Papal claim to superiority over the State as well as the Church; to champion the rights of the individual reason and conscience and the principle of religious toleration."

Much of this came later. But the germs were there.

The most surprising thing about Luther is that he died in his bed. Never probably has any man's life been sought by so many and such powerful enemies. It was lived under the shadow of the stake: he "died daily." And he was a man of magnificent courage; he "cared for none of these things." His theological influence has been small; his religious great. He was a man of action not of speech, and of emotion not of thought. The spirit of the Renaissance was foreign to him; he was overweighted by an impossible Augustinianism, and by a semi-magical sacramentalism which was a survival of the mediæval schools. To the critic

he seems a meteoric, at times a scarcely sane, genius; it is in men of less note, such as Sebastian Franck or Balthasar Hubmaier, that, in spite of the suspicion of Anabaptism which attached to them, we find a "larger air." Iconoclasm is not one of the fruits of the Spirit; but harder and less gracious personalities were called for by the rough work of that rough age. He could rail, on occasions, like a drunken fishwife. But he was an immense spiritual genius and emancipator. And there was a demonic power in the man which the times required.

### THE URGE OF LIFE

**Instinct and Personality.** By A. CAMPBELL GARNETT, M.A., Litt.D.  
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DR. GARNETT's preface is so modest and his style so lucid and unpretentious that the far-reaching nature of his investigation into the theories of current psychology is not fully recognized until his closely knit argument nears its conclusion. In some two hundred octavo pages of fair type Dr. Garnett covers an immense field, and the comprehensiveness and rapidity of his advance are somewhat staggering. In big sweeping movements he envelops this theory or that, strips it of its impedimenta, absorbs what remains into his system, and passes on, leaving the ground behind him strewn with the wreckage of his passing. What the illustrious authors of these assaulted theories think about it all, remains to be seen, but from a layman's point of view the end justifies the means, for Dr. Garnett has formulated a very neat and practicable theory of life, which allows the scientists to go on working at one end of it and the philosophers to go on talking at the other, while in the middle the student of affairs may perhaps discern the embryo of a new ethic, for which, however, Dr. Garnett is only accidentally responsible.

Dr. Garnett's theory is closely akin to that formulated by Professor T. P. Nunn, which conceives man as a single organism, a "body-mind," and, the Professor maintains, spiritualizes the body but does not materialize the soul. The urge found in all life processes, whether conscious or unconscious, Professor Nunn calls "hormic," hence the theory is known as the "hormic theory." Dr. Garnett's peculiar contribution to it is important, for while Professor Nunn divides hormic processes into conscious and unconscious, and doubts whether the hormic activities of the lowlier organisms are conscious, Dr. Garnett holds that all the hormic processes of life, however lowly or automatic, are either conscious and conative or, at least, originated in the consciousness. The argument which leads him to this conclusion is well supported by the evidence he produces, and the conclusion itself does away with the need for Parallelism as a working hypothesis for the biologist and bio-chemist, or the intrusion of some peculiar vital element in a physical universe that would remain lifeless without it. For Dr. Garnett seeks the conscious beyond the confines of life, and assumes it to be automatically active in the physical processes of the material universe.

Here Dr. Garnett is arguing by analogy, for in dealing with current theories of the unconscious, he finds reasons for dismissing the idea of an unconscious mind, discovering in the phenomena of the unconscious nothing but physiological—neural—processes set in motion by conscious "orders," that have not been negated. Hence the "cure" of the psycho-analyst is effected, if at all, by recalling to memory the original "order" so that it may be countermanded. That done pathological neurosis at once ceases. There is something in the ultimate issue of "hormic" faintly reminiscent of W. K. Clifford's "mind-stuff," but the likeness is more apparent than real. It is interesting to note that both Professor Nunn and Dr. Garnett are at pains to explain that the Hormic Theory is remote as possible from materialism, and that it preserves to the psychical all that ethics and religion require. It may be so. There is nothing in it to which the mechanist will object, but in so far as religion is embodied in dogmatic theology it is likely to find the theory a tight fit. As for ethics, the closer they are brought into relation with the urge of life the better. The question is: Cannot they be brought a little closer into this relation than Dr. Garnett brings them?





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## GUIDE BOOKS

**So You're Going to France.** By CLARA E. LAUGHLIN. (Methuen. 10s. 6d.)

**The French Riviera.** By A. R. BONUS. (Methuen. 6s.)

**Sicily, Past and Present.** By ASHLEY BROWN. (Methuen. 6s.)

**Baedeker's Italy from the Alps to Naples.** Third Revised Edition. (Allen & Unwin. 15s.)

THE next best thing to travelling is to read a good guide book, but to read four and not to begin next day packing one's bag and buying one's ticket is practically impossible for anyone who knows what "wanderlust" means. The first three books on this list are of the same variety, but "So You're Going to France" is easily the best of them. It is a model for all guide books that are not exhaustive. It is written by a real expert, and it tells one of certain "tours" that one may make in France either by road or by rail. The tours are admirably planned, and the book gives one precisely the kind of information which one wants and which one is apt to find missing from the stereotyped guide. The tours include Normandy and Brittany; the Loire; Poitiers, Angoulême, Périgueux, Cahors, and Carcassone; the road from Paris to the Riviera and back; Biarritz and the Pyrenees, and east by the Marne to Strasbourg. Mr. Brown's book on Sicily is also a pleasant and useful one, though he keeps to the beaten track of Palermo, Girgenti, Syracuse, Catania, Taormina, and Messina. The book can be recommended for those who wish to learn something about the history and buildings of the places they are to visit. We think Mr. Brown is wrong in not more strongly insisting that the traveller should see Castrogiovanni. Mr. Bonus's "The French Riviera" is a volume in "The Little Guides." It is a very handy series, being small enough for the smallest pocket, and the amount of information which these little books contain is wonderful. Mr. Bonus's is well up to the standard.

Baedeker requires no introduction. The new edition of "Italy" is very welcome, as the old one was out of date. This volume is an abridgment of the three-volume handbook, and is very convenient for those who do not want the most detailed information. The ordinary traveller will find here practically everything that he wants.

## ON THE EDITOR'S TABLE

Two interesting political biographies are "Sir Robert Peel," by A. A. W. Ramsay (Constable, 14s.), in the "Makers of the Nineteenth Century" series, and "The Eighth Earl of Elgin," by J. L. Morison (Hodder & Stoughton, 15s.). Other biographical works are "A Memoir of Herbert Edward Ryle, sometime Bishop of Winchester," by the Rev. Maurice H. Fitzgerald (Macmillan, 15s.); "Henry Clay Frick," by George Harvey (Scribners, 21s.), and two new volumes in "Representative Women" Series, "Elizabeth Barrett Browning," by Irene Cooper Willis, and "Letizia Bonaparte (Madame Mère)," by Clement Shaw (Howe, 3s. 6d. each).

"Mysteries of History," by C. J. S. Thompson (Faber & Gwyer, 12s. 6d.), ranges over a large field which includes the deaths of Amy Robsart, James I., Charles II., and others, and the lives of such people as the Chevalier d'Eon, Cagliostro, and James Graham. Another historical book is "The Court of Christian VII. of Denmark," by P. Nors (Hurst & Blackett, 18s.).

Volume VIII. of Dr. J. W. Mellor's "A Comprehensive Treatise on Inorganic and Theoretical Chemistry" (Longmans, 63s.), covers Nitrogen and Phosphorus. There is published the eleventh edition of "Handbook of Commercial Geography," by G. G. Chisholm, revised by L. Dudley Stamp (Longmans, 25s.).

"The Pre-War Mind in Great Britain," by C. E. Playne (Allen & Unwin, 16s.), is a historical review of the psychology which led up to the war.

"Third Leaders from 'The Times'," is edited with an introduction by Professor Gordon of Oxford (Arnold, 7s. 6d.).

## BOOKS IN BRIEF

**Sell's Directory of Registered Telegraphic Addresses, 1928.** (Sell. 45s.)

This reference book is in its eighty-third year. A new system of reference was introduced last year, and it is extremely easy to use the directory. It contains an immense amount of information; for instance, the section in which trades are classified is in itself extremely useful, while the Newspaper Press Section is valuable to advertisers and others. The directory contains over 100,000 registered telegraphic addresses.

**The Life of Mathew Dawson.** By E. M. HUMPHRIS. (Witherby. 12s. 6d.)

This is a generously illustrated account of the life of the famous trainer who, besides a great many other famous horses, trained the great St. Simon—the horse who was never beaten, the best horse, Dawson thought, ever foaled. The Duke of Portland writes a very interesting account of his first view of St. Simon, and how Mat said, "This is quite a likely looking animal," and the Duke bought him for 1,600 guineas. Mr. Dawson was the friend of all the great men of his time. "Was there ever such a sight seen as a poor old broken-down trainer armed in to dinner by the Prime Minister on one side and the Lord Chief Justice on the other?" he exclaimed. But he was a man of character, and his friendships were not bought by submission. His father was a trainer and he himself trained for most of the great owners of the nineteenth century.

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BRAMH'S only Violin Concerto (in D) has never been recorded, and the H.M.V. are to be warmly congratulated on now producing a brilliant record of it. It is played by Kreisler and the Orchestra of the Berlin State Opera, conducted by Dr. Leo Blech. (Five 12-in. records. DB1120-4. 8s. 6d. each.) This magnificent work was completed in 1878 when Brahms was forty-five, and was immediately recognized as a masterpiece. It owed something of its success to Joachim, to whom it was dedicated, and who was the soloist at its first performance in 1879 at Leipzig. It is said that Joachim found it "difficult," and it is certainly a good test of a performer's quality. It is one of the works in which Kreisler has won laurels in the concert hall. He is very good on these records, particularly in the fascinating, rhythmic third movement. The orchestra and the conductor also come out of the ordeal with great credit. The recording is on the whole excellent. Our only criticism is that occasionally the balance is disturbed, the violin seeming almost to drown the orchestra, and that, also occasionally, there is a tendency to shrillness. The records gain by being played on a half-tone needle. It should be noticed that the last side of the third record is devoted to a Romance in A major of Schumann, played as a violin solo by Kreisler. This rather slight morsel is inserted here so that it becomes possible to purchase each of the three movements separately. Brahms and the violin occur again in this month's list, for Isolde Menges plays two of the famous Hungarian Dances (in B minor and G minor), a charming record (10-in. record. E496. 4s. 6d.).

The best vocal record is by Madame Maria Olczewska, who is new to the gramophone, but is one of the popular contraltos at Covent Garden. She makes a brilliant début in the most famous of operatic songs the "Habanera" from Act I. of "Carmen," and the artless "Printemps qui commence" from Act I. of "Samson et Dalila" (12-in. record. D1386. 6s. 6d.). Almost, but not quite so good, is the record in which F. Heldy, soprano, and F. Anseu, tenor, sing two duets from "Carmen," "Qui sait de quel démon" and "Parle-moi de ma mère" (12-in. record. DB1115. 8s. 6d.). Madame Heldy has a fine voice, but it does not "come through" quite so well as Madame Olczewska's contralto. A very good choral record is Wesley's "Praise the Lord, O my soul," sung by the Choir of the Temple Church (12-in. record. C1436. 4s. 6d.).

Finally there are three records in which Miss Mimi Crawford sings Mr. Milne's series of songs "Now We are Six" (B2621, 2678, and 2679. 3s. each). Miss Crawford is not sparing of archness and sentimentality, and she uses her voice in the extraordinary way in which apparently English musical comedy performers are trained to sing.



## COMPANY MEETINGS.

## THE BRITISH DRUG HOUSES, LIMITED.

The annual general meeting was held at the Midland Hotel, St. Pancras, London, on Tuesday last, Mr. Charles Alexander Hill, the Chairman, said:—

The Trading Profit for the year, as you will have seen, amounted to £57,979 12s. 2d. After deducting prior charges, and paying the dividend on the Preference Shares, there is a balance of £36,951 1s. 7d. The prior charges include Amortization of Leaseholds and Depreciation of Plant. The amount written off these assets is £3,000 more than in 1926; at the same time the various properties and plant thus written down have been maintained in a condition of thorough efficiency.

I will next consider the Balance-Sheet. On the liabilities side, the item "Sundry Creditors" is now only £50,000, that is, £10,000 less than 1926; and the item "Amount due to Bankers," which was on account of advances made against bills for collection in respect of export trade, has disappeared. Turning to the assets; Freehold and Leasehold Properties and Plant, Machinery, &c., are respectively slightly less than the previous year, due to the fact that the amounts written off exceed the additions to these items. Stock-in-Trade and Sundry Debtors are practically the same, being £1,000 and £2,000 less respectively.

The Balance-Sheet discloses the strength of the Company's financial position. More than half of our capital is liquid. The current assets—Stock-in-Trade, Sundry Debtors, and Cash—total £441,000, and the current liabilities a mere £50,000; so that we have a net surplus of nearly £400,000.

"Goodwill" does not figure in the Balance-Sheet: nor does the item "Reserve Fund," but this year we recommend that a beginning be made with £10,000, and as opportunity offers we propose to continue building up this fund.

The Company's business during 1927 showed a very satisfactory increase over that of 1926, this increase being equally divided between the home trade and the export trade, and being traceable in both markets to a greater demand for the Company's special products, which in turn is largely due to the increasing recognition by the medical profession of the excellence of the Company's medical products.

I feel that you will expect me to refer to the publicity which has recently been accorded to our activities in connection with vitamin products, in particular Vitamin D—Radiostol—which we are manufacturing on the large scale. Last year I referred to this Company's work in the domain of bio-chemistry and researches on vitamins, and predicted that the Company's new product Radio-Malt might be expected to have an appreciable influence on the national health. That prediction has been realized, and Radio-Malt is now rapidly becoming, if it has not already become, a product of national importance.

The resolutions were carried unanimously.

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## FINANCIAL SECTION

## THE WEEK IN THE CITY

## CEMENT—THOMAS TILLING—ANGLO-PERSIAN OIL—MORTGAGE BANK BONDS.

**A**FTER the hectic rush of buying last week the industrial boom on the Stock Exchange has slackened its pace. The situation in the New York stock markets is making for caution on this side. News of a Wall Street slump seems to be hourly awaited, but as far as we can read the American markets a few speculative stocks have been pyramided while the bulk of the "investment" stocks are attracting genuine investment buying. On our side there are still some spectacular rises in the new industrial companies to come, and even some of the sound "investment" shares have not yet participated as they might have done in the industrial boom. For example, the two following shares might be included in a trust company's buying order:—

	Price.	1927 Divi- dends.	1927 Earn- ings.	Yield % on Divs.	Yield % on Earn- ings.
Associated Portland Cement Mfrs. Ltd.	27s. cd.	8%	8.3%*	6.22%	6.45%
Thomas Tilling Ltd.	4 5-16 cd.	30%	38%	7.25%	9.19%

\* After depreciation reserves.

In the case of the Associated Portland Cement the earnings on the ordinary shares before deduction of depreciation reserves (£265,000) and sinking funds (£95,858) worked out at 22.7 per cent. Though cement prices will be lower in the current year the Chairman stated at the general meeting that he looked for an increased turnover at lower manufacturing costs. In the last three years the consumption of cement in this country has gone up from 123.7 lbs. to 176.5 lbs. per capita. In the United States cement consumption is about 520 lbs. per capita. An interesting point in favour of Associated Portland Cement is that while the book value of the ordinary shares works out at 23s. 2d., the fact that the Company holds 1,229,592 ordinary shares of British Portland Cement, which are quoted at about 44s. 6d., brings the break-up value of Associated shares to 35s. 2d.

The Thomas Tilling cash bonus was one of the surprises of the 1927 reports. Together with the final dividend of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., making the usual 15 per cent. for the year, a cash bonus of 15 per cent. was declared. The present price of 4 5-16 suggests that the market does not believe in a permanent distribution of 30 per cent. Surely this restraint in an era of industrial optimism is rather out of place. In 1926 the Company earned 31 per cent., and in 1927 no less than 38½ per cent. At £219,477 the net profits for 1927 show an increase of 21½ per cent. over those of 1926. The book value of the ordinary shares works out at 38s., but it is possible that the item of "investments" (£1,427,526), contains a substantial hidden reserve. It is well known that Thomas Tilling has for many years held a large part of the capital of many of the leading omnibus companies in the provinces as well as of British Automobile Traction which holds shares in similar companies. An amalgamation has now been formed of all the provincial omnibus holdings of Thomas Tilling, British Automobile Traction, and British Electric Traction. The new company, to be called Tilling and British Automobile Traction, operating nearly five thousand omnibuses, will be the biggest 'bus combine in the world.

That the Anglo-Persian Oil Company should have passed its interim dividend is so surprising that one wonders whether the event has any political significance. In respect of the year ending March 31st, 1927, the Company paid an interim dividend of 5 per cent. and a final dividend of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on the ordinary share capital which had been increased by the 50 per cent. bonus in the previous year. This distribution was conservative inasmuch as the Company actually earned 27 per cent. The Company, of course, has suffered the full extent of the slump in oil prices during the trading year which ends this week. Moreover, it cannot meet the fall in refined oil prices by buying

crude oil more cheaply, as it refines its own production. It may be only with the object of conserving cash resources that the interim dividend is passed, but it may also have some political significance. Does it not call attention to the extent to which oil dumped from Russia is taking trade away from the Anglo-Persian? The Government of India has gone the length of ordering the Tariff Board to inquire into the oil price war which has been raging since the Standard Oil Company of New York imported Russian kerosene into India. The Tariff Board is asked to determine whether oil price cutting is likely to extend to petrol and whether the Indian oil industry should be protected against Russian oil dumped on the Indian market. The oil companies in India, headed by the Burmah Oil and the Royal Dutch-Shell group, have claimed that because Russian kerosene has been derived from properties acquired by the Soviet Government from the former owners without payment and operated with sweated or forced labour, it can be sold at "uneconomic" prices and will in time drive Indian products off the market. Much the same situation exists in this country. Russian petrol is undercutting the brands marketed by the large companies and the Anglo-Persian has apparently been losing more trade than the others. The Anglo-Persian has thus made an effective protest against the Government's action in breaking off relations with Russia while leaving the Soviet Government free to injure the trade of the oil company in which the British taxpayer has a majority interest. The Treasury loses £375,000 by the passing of this interim dividend.

Curiously enough, in contrast to the reaction in the oil share market the oil situation in America has taken a definite turn upward. Whatever the Americans may say about the British rubber restriction scheme, they have now accepted restriction in their own oil industry. Apart from the restriction which is being maintained in the Seminole area, Oklahoma, the oil companies in California have now decided to shut in between 60,000 to 70,000 barrels a day with the full connivance and support of the State Governor. The total output of crude oil in the United States this year has been kept below the level of the previous year and a slight increase has been made in light crude oil and gasoline prices. For the moment the situation seems to be well in hand. Moreover, some of the wild men in the American oil industry are either in gaol or threatened with gaol as the result of the Teapot Dome scandals, which is a help to the powerful few who favour the restriction policy.

In the foreign market the bonds of old-established mortgage banks generally rank high in order of security. Two new sterling mortgage bonds came on the market this week—Hungarian General Savings Bank  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. and Mortgage Bank of Bogota 7 per cent. The first were privately placed at  $97\frac{1}{2}$ , and dealings began on Tuesday of this week at 98. The second were issued to the public at  $92\frac{1}{2}$ . The yield to the buyer of the first is £7 13s. per cent. flat, and £7 13s. 6d. to final redemption in 1963, and of the second £7 11s. 3d. flat, and £7 13s. to final redemption in 1958. Neither of the two issues is redeemable before 1938 except for the sinking fund. The basis of the security is the same in each case. The mortgage bonds are issued in respect of loans made by the Bank secured by mortgages on agricultural land or freehold urban property to an amount not exceeding 50 per cent. of the value appraised on a conservative basis. Neither of the Banks has ever made a loss on this mortgage business. We would not like to say whether there is a greater political risk in Colombia than in Hungary—Colombia has enjoyed twenty-five years of uninterrupted peace and may therefore be nearer a war than Hungary—but there is this difference in favour of the Hungarian Savings issue—that the mortgage bonds are also a direct obligation of a Bank which does a general banking business apart from mortgages.



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